



**WRIT 340: Advanced Writing and Communication
for Engineers**

Units: 4

FALL 2023

66845: M/W 3:30 -4:50 (GFS 105)

66837: M/W 5:00-6:20 (GFS 111) (Global Innovations)

Instructor: Helen H. Choi, Esq.

Office: Olin Hall of Engineering 106N

**Office Hours (via Google Meet): M/W 1:00pm-2:30 pm
(sign ups on course Blackboard page)(contact me to make
appointments outside of these times)**

**Contact Info: helenhch@usc.edu (replies within 48 hours
during semester)**

IT Help: Viterbi Information Technology (VIT) Office

Hours of Service: 8am – 5pm

Contact Info: engrhelp@usc.edu, (213) 740-0517 (office)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

340 Advanced Writing (4 units; 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.*

From the technologies that have propelled space exploration hundreds of millions of miles from Earth to microscopic leaps in semiconductor development that span the length of two strands of human DNA, the world's engineers are pushing the boundaries of science and technology, and in so doing, they are also crossing national, cultural, and linguistic borders. As much of modern engineering practice involves and impacts people around the world, an understanding of global engineering trends and perspectives in communication, engineering ethics, and public service is critical. In this specialized section of WRIT 340 (Advanced Writing and Communication for Engineers - Global Innovations and Perspectives), we will identify and examine technological innovations across the globe and practice the concomitant communication skills, ethical approaches, and cross-cultural awareness necessary to navigate engineering on a global scale.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In five years, 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 and international constituent that reflects the importance of engineering solutions
- 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:

Subscribe to the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. We will be using these sources often throughout the semester. Students are eligible for free subscriptions [here](#) via the USC Libraries.

Most of the exercises in this course is based on *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace* by Joseph Williams and Gregory Colomb. The materials based on this text will be provided in class. However, this is a very handy book for those interested in delving further into the subject matter. It is available on Amazon.

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.

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 major assignments for the course are as follows:

1. *Illumin* magazine article: students will examine and explain topics relating to global engineering developments and innovations
2. *Ethics*: students will examine engineering ethics and analyze engineering ethical codes and norms in global cultural contexts
3. *Wikipedia group project*: in groups, students will write for the world's encyclopedia on an engineering topic with global applicability to an international audience
4. *Podcast group or individual presentation*: in groups or individually, students will produce one podcast on an engineering topic with global applicability to an international audience
5. *E-Portfolio*: students will substantially revise their *Illumin* article and ethics paper and create a website of reflections relating to their writing.

Specific parameters for each assignment are available in the [Assignment Packet](#) for this course and a summary of point allocation is presented below.

Assignments [subject to change]	Points	Course Percentage
Illumin Unit	200	20%
Ethics Unit	200	20%
Wikipedia Project	140	14%
Podcast Project	135	13.5%
E-Portfolio	300	30%
In-Class Activities (subject to change)	25	2.5%
Total	1000	100%

INDIVIDUAL MAJOR WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

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. (The *Illumin* article, ethics paper, and the portfolio are collectively referred to in this syllabus as "Major Writing Assignments.")

Specific assignment descriptions and parameters are noted in the Assignment Packet for this course.

Illumin Unit (200 points)

You will respond to a Call for Papers from *Illumin*, an on-line magazine published by students in the USC School of Engineering on a topic of global interest. Your audience is the actual *Illumin* audience – real people around the world who are interested in science and engineering but are not be professional scientists or engineers. The *Illumin* assignment is more specifically described in the course Assignment Packet and consists of two components:

1. 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. You must first submit a draft on time if you want to participate in the peer reviews. If you have thoughtfully completed and submitted two peer reviews on Blackboard/PeerMark by the peer review deadline, you will receive 20 points.

2. **Magazine Article** (180 points)

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

Ethics Unit (200 points)

You will respond to a Call for Papers from *Viterbi Conversations in Ethics* (VCE), an on-line magazine published by the students USC School of Engineering. You will examine the role of engineering in a relevant ethical context that reflects **global interests and perspectives**. Your audience will be your professional peers around the world in your own engineering discipline. The ethics assignment is more specifically described in the course Assignment Packet and consists of the following two components:

1. **Ethics 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 on time if you want to participate in the peer reviews.**

2. **Ethics Final Paper** (180 points)

You will write a paper that examines the role of engineering in a relevant global contexts through the lens of various ethical frameworks.

E-Portfolio (300 points)

The portfolio is a university-wide 340 component and will consist of two **substantially rewritten** course assignments: **Ethics and Illumin**. The e-portfolio assignment is more specifically described in the course Assignment Packet and consists of the following components:

1. **Rewritten Illumin article** (135 points)
2. **Rewritten ethics paper** (135 points)
3. **E-portfolio website and reflections** (30 points)

GROUP PROJECTS

You have two main group projects: the Wikipedia assignment and a podcast. Specific assignment descriptions and parameters are noted in the Assignment Packet for this course.

Wikipedia Group Project (140 points)

The collaborative portion of WRIT 340 will consist of a substantial edit of a Wikipedia article on a topic related to engineering. You will select your own groups, and your group can select topics from a list on the Wiki Edu dashboard.

We will be using the Wiki Edu dashboard to complete training modules to learn how to edit in Wikipedia and draft article edits for this assignment. All students must sign up for the Wiki Education Dashboard during the first week of the semester via the link provided on Blackboard → Announcements. Your Wikipedia Individual Trainings constitute the individually graded portion of this assignment.

All other components of this project (such as the article and in-class work) will be graded as a group, and all members of the group who attend class will receive the same grade for such components. Students who do not attend class during group work will receive 0 points for that work.

The Wikipedia assignment is more specifically described in the course Assignment Packet and consists of the following components:

Wiki Education Individual Trainings (20 points)

In order learn how to edit on Wikipedia, you must complete these training exercises on the Wiki Education Dashboard:

1. Week 9 Wikipedia Individual Trainings (10 points)
2. Week 10 Wikipedia Individual Trainings (10 points)

Group Wikipedia Article (100 points)

As a group, members will select a Wikipedia article to edit, and once the group has finished drafting substantial edits to an existing Wikipedia article, members will move them to the main space and go live on Wikipedia. This initial live version will be considered to be the group's final product, and will be the graded version.

Group Wikipedia in-class work (20 points)

During this project, there will be a few in-class deliverables. *You must attend class and participate if you want to receive credit for this work.*

Podcast (135 points)

The podcasts will be created by students in groups of 2-5, and they will consist of demos for a new Viterbi project called "Engineering Moment." Students can pick their own groups and topics within the general area of engineering innovations and perspectives. Students have the option of working on this project individually. Specific assignment descriptions and parameters are noted in the Assignment Packet for this course.

The podcast assignment consists of three components:

Podcast (100 points)

Your group will submit a podcast episode for the podcast, *Engineering Moment*. The podcast will align with the mission of Engineering Moment and discuss a topic on global engineering.

Podcast proposal (25 points)

Your group will submit a podcast proposal in a professional memo format.

Podcast review (10 points)

Students will select and review one podcast (other than their own). This assignment will be graded on an individual basis.

PROFESSIONALISM

This is an in-person class. Unless you have express permission from the university to attend this course online, you must attend in-person.

This is an interactive-style class. 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!

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. For in-class assignment worth less than ten (10) points each, the lowest two in-class assignment grades are dropped at the end of the semester; practically speaking, this means that if you happen to miss two classes in which we do in-class work (worth less than 10 points) , they will not count as a "0" as they will be exempted from your total course grade at the end of the semester. Not every class meeting will include in-class work.

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 (Student) 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 student 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.

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.

Intellectual Property. All materials prepared for this course, including this syllabus, are protected by copyright laws and may not be uploaded or otherwise shared in any manner with third parties (such as Course Hero or any other site, company, or entity) without the express written consent of the copyright holder. All legal remedies related to the illegal or otherwise unauthorized use of course materials will be pursued to the fullest extent of all applicable laws, guidelines, and regulations.

Plagiarism. All written work for this course must be students' own personal work without the use of external tools and will be evaluated by Turnitin and the GLTR AI-detection tool developed by the MIT-IBM Watson AI lab and Harvard NLP. Possible violations will be addressed in accordance with university guidelines on plagiarism and academic integrity.

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. However, instances of plagiarism may result in separate sanctions such as an F in the course, suspension, or expulsion, in accordance with university rules.

GRADING:

Grading of written work:

All assignments are 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-).

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

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 the weekly Wikipedia Individual Trainings are not subject to this late policy, and they are ineligible for partial points. In-class work cannot be made up, and late Wikipedia Individual Trainings receive zero points, pursuant to the Assignment Packet.

Do not, under any circumstances, fail to turn in the Illumin article, Ethics paper, and portfolio. 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 all three of these assignments are not turned in.**

[INTENTIONALLY BLANK]

COURSE CALENDAR [subject to change]

DATE¹	ACTIVITIES²	TASKS BEFORE CLASSES & DUE DATES³
UNIT 1: ILLUMIN		
Week 1	01/09: Introductions and diagnostic 01/11: Diagnostic review and intro to Illumin	Sign up for Wiki Education dashboard; sign up for news sharing <u>READ:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BB → Syllabus • BB → Assignment Packet → Illumin • BB → Weekly Content → Week 1 → Illumin Research Guide
Week 2	01/16: NO CLASS; University holiday 01/18: Illumin paper grading and topic selection	<u>READ:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 articles on Illumin • BB → Weekly Content → Week 2 → Sample Illumin Paper
Week 3	01/23: Illumin thesis and outline (5 points - in-class work) 01/25: 4Cs – Correctness, Concision	<u>DUE:</u> Illumin Draft due on BB → Assignment Submissions → Illumin Draft prior to 11:59PM on Friday, 01/27
Week 4	01/30: 4Cs – Clarity, Cohesion 02/01: Reverse outlining and writing process reflection	<u>DUE:</u> Illumin Peer Review due on BB → Assignment Submissions → Illumin Peer Reviews prior to 11:59PM on Monday, 01/30 <u>DUE:</u> Illumin Article due on BB → Assignment Submissions → Illumin Article prior to 11:59PM on Friday, 02/03
UNIT 2: ETHICS		
Week 5	02/06: ShiftSC Ethics Module 02/08: What's Good and Why	<u>GET AHEAD:</u> Complete your Week 9 and Week 10 Wikipedia trainings
Week 6	02/13: Intro to ethics paper assignment; readings (ethical lenses, cross-cultural considerations, professionalism) 02/15: Sample papers, small group work; select paper topics and begin drafts now	<u>READ:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BB → Assignment Packet → Ethics Paper • BB → Weekly Content → Week 6 → SCU, Voss & Aguad, Luegenbiehl & Clancy
Week 7	02/20: NO CLASS - University holiday 02/22: Talking about ethics: Hypotheticals applying ethical lenses	<u>READ:</u> BB → Weekly Content → Week 7 → Van Noorden, Roussi <u>DUE:</u> Ethics draft on BB → Assignment Submissions → Ethics draft prior to 11:59PM on Friday, 02/24
Week 8	02/27: Talking about ethics: Pre-writing interviews 03/01: Ethics paper workshop	<u>DUE:</u> Ethics peer reviews due on BB → Assignment Submissions → Ethics Peer Review prior to 11:59 PM on Monday, 02/27 <u>DUE:</u> Ethics Paper on BB → Assignment Submissions → Ethics Paper prior to 11:59PM on Friday, 03/03
Week 9	03/06: Ethics paper workshop 03/08: Open class	<u>DUE:</u> Week 9 Individual Wikipedia Trainings Monday, 03/06 prior to 11:59 PM on the Wiki Edu dashboard

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 two grades for in-class work worth 5 points or less will be dropped at the end of the semester.

³ Please refer to the Assignment Packet and other course materials for specific due dates and times.

SPRING BREAK 3/12 to 3/19		
UNIT 3: COLLABORATIVE WORK AND E-PORTFOLIO		
Week 10	03/20: Wikipedia project begins; group and topic selection 03/22: Mandatory in-class group meetings	DUE: Week 10 Individual Wikipedia Trainings due Monday, 03/20, prior to 11:59PM on Wiki Edu dashboard.
Week 11	03/27: Mandatory in-class group meetings 03/29: Mandatory in-class group meetings	GET AHEAD: Review Illumin and ethics comments and attend office hours with portfolio questions; start e-portfolios
Week 12	04/03: Mandatory in-class group meetings 04/05: Mandatory in-class group meetings	GET AHEAD: Review Illumin and ethics comments and attend office hours with portfolio questions; start e-portfolios DUE: Wikipedia article due Friday, 04/07 prior to 11:59 PM
Week 13	04/10: Podcast begins; group and topic selection 04/12: Podcast group work	GET AHEAD: Finish your revised ethics and Illumin assignments and finish e-portfolio reflections. DUE: Podcast proposal via BB in-class 04/12 (25 pts)
Week 14	04/17: Podcast group work 04/19: Podcast group work and recording	DUE: Podcast due Friday, 04/21 prior to 11/59PM
Week 15	04/24: E-Portfolio workshop 04/26: Podcast reviews; course evaluations, portfolio questions	DUE: Publish E-Portfolio on Google Sites on Monday, 05/01 prior to 11:59 PM (no extensions)

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 in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the university and the [Office of Academic Integrity](#). Please familiarize yourself with the discussions of plagiarism and other issues related to academic integrity in [The USC Student Handbook](#), including but not limited to the Handbook's sections on Student Commitment - Academic Integrity and USC Disciplinary Process - Resolution of Allegations of Academic Integrity Violations.

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

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

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) - (213) 740-5086
eeotix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298
usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) - (213) 740-0776
osas.usc.edu

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710

campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

ombuds.usc.edu

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice - (323) 442-3340 or otfp@med.usc.edu

chan.usc.edu/otfp

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.