Writing 340
Advanced Writing & Communication for Engineers

"Most people do not realize that writing is a craft. You have to take your apprenticeship in it like anything else."

- Katherine Anne Porter

Contact Information

Professor
Jon-Erik S. Tateri, MA
Email
tateri@usc.edu
I check email between 8:00am and 5:00pm from Sunday to Thursday. I do not check email on Friday or Saturday.

Office Hours (In-Person)
Room: OHE 106R
66801R | MWF 7:30am -8:30am

During final exam week, office hours may be scheduled to change.

Office Hours (Remote)
Room: Virtual (Zoom)
66801R | By appointment.

During final exam week, office hours may be scheduled to change.

Course Meeting Information

WRIT 340 | 66801R
Room: GFS 104 | Mandatory
In-Person (*Masks recommended*):
MWF 9:00am - 9:50am

Technical Communications in the Workplace

As a communicator of technical and professional information, you must be able to meet numerous requirements, both in the academic world and in the workplace. You will build skills to produce precise technical documents that serve expert, novice, and public audiences.

You should finish the course with the ability to document and format technical information in reports, letters, instructions, proposals, and memoranda. **Purpose and audience guide all oral presentations and written documents**. After you develop an awareness of how to fulfill your future communication responsibilities, classwork will focus on several specific activities that will help you build writing skills and effectively present technical information.

This course requires students to revise writing to ensure clarity, accuracy, consistency, and precision. Persons who specialize in technical areas have a responsibility to themselves, their co-workers, and their professions to be prepared to handle communications tasks effectively. Competent, successful communication is valuable on any team, so the challenge is to become one of those effective individuals. Work with me, your peers, and writing specialists in the *USC Writing Center* on assignments. Students are required to visit the *USC Writing Center* or with me one-on-one at least once during the semester. Some students may be asked to meet more frequently to support success in the course.

Reminder: As per the Centers of Disease Control (CDC) and/or University guidelines, masks are *recommended* (until further notice) for all people regardless of vaccination status during synchronous or in-person meetings.

Catalogue Description

WRIT 340 is an upper-division technical writing course designed to provide instructions 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 150. *Required*.

NOTE: A writing evaluation and technical inventory survey will be conducted on the first day of class to verify that your writing skills meet the course prerequisites. You *must* pass this test to enter the class.

Required Textbooks

- *The Engineering Communication Manual* | Richard House et al. | Oxford University Press | 2016 | First Edition (spiral-bound)
- A grammar handbook
- Collegiate dictionary
- Thesaurus

NOTE: Additional reading may be assigned from a variety of sources, including reading material written by your peers and links on Blackboard.

Suggested Textbooks

- *A Writer's Reference* | Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers | Harvard University Press | 2018 | Third Edition
- *Introduction to Engineering Research* | Wendy C. Crone | Morgan & Claypool Publishers | 2020 | First Edition
- *The Craft of Scientific Writing* | Michael Alley | Springer | 2018 | Fourth Edition

Course Objectives

- A variety of professional and academic engineering communication skills.
- Proficiency in writing for academic, public, and professional audiences.
- Flexibility in communication 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.
- Collaborative to produce a white paper related to a pressing social issue.
- 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.

Participation, Attendance, Emergency Sessions, and Engagement

Participation
You are expected to be an active contributor to the class, *not* a passive listener. Active contribution includes volunteering answers to questions; asking questions; requesting clarification; challenging me or other students in productive ways; contributing useful and relevant comments; engaging fully in any workshop-type activities.

Attendance
Attendance will be taken at the end of each class session. Program policy requires you attend all class sessions. You will not earn participation points for activities you miss. Students with more than *four* absences during the semester may also receive a lower final course grade. Special circumstances will be considered on an individual basis.

NOTE: A student who is *absent*, however, is responsible for completing any individual in-class assignments by the due date.

Emergency Sessions on Zoom
Only during emergency sessions, the course will be run as a virtual workshop on Zoom. Students will be asked to engage with digital, learning-intensive activities. Each class will begin promptly at the designated hour. Latecomers disrupt the class proceedings and seriously affect the group dynamics desirable for an effective learning environment. Chronic tardiness may also affect a student's final course grade. Special circumstances will be considered on an individual basis.

Synchronous (In-class) and Asynchronous (Out-of-class) Assignments and Class Discussions
The following will impact your points for Synchronous (In-class) and Asynchronous (Out-of-class) Assignments and Class Discussions: evidence of preparation for class, which includes having completed any reading; quality of email correspondence; quality and quantity of participation in individual conferences; and quality and quantity of interaction with fellow students on group projects.

Peer Reviews
A particularly important contribution you will make to the class is in critiquing other students' work in our Peer Reviews. Our Synchronous (In-class) or Asynchronous (Out-of-class) Peer Reviews are mandatory, and you must fully complete the review. If you do not, you will lose participation points. In these Peer Reviews, you will provide feedback to your classmates and/or brainstorm with them (i.e. Group Project). You also will be required to meet with others outside of class to share work and give/receive feedback.

Oral Presentations and Panel Discussions
Each student will be involved in *formal* and *informal* presentations during the semester. These presentations will be given for a specifc audience. You will be obligated to attend your classmates' presentations, and provide feedback on some of them.

NOTE: For the *Illumin* Article Paper (Individual) and the Heroic Engineering Project (Group) oral presentation and panel discussion respectively, plan to build presentation materials with Google Slides, Prezi, PowerPoint or another tool appropriate for the topic. For Heroic Engineering Project (Group) panel discussion, each student will present a portion of the material. Each group member will receive the same grade for the presentations. For other presentations, consider what visuals, if any, are appropriate.

Major Assignments including Peer Reviews and Oral Presentations (for due dates, please see Brightspace)

~~I. Technical Description (50 points) with Peer Review (10 points)~~
- ~~The goal of the assignment is to briefly explain/describe a breakthrough or cutting-edge technology, device, or process related to your engineering discipline to an audience of your peers (your classmates). Follow the six steps below to create your technical description. The writing assignment should not exceed three pages of double-spaced text (not including your bibliographic entries, which can be displayed on a subsequent page).~~

II. *Illumin* Article (100 points) with Peer Review (10 points) and Oral Presentation (25 points)
- Respond to a Call for Papers from *Illumin*, an online magazine published by the USC Viterbi School of Engineering. You audinece is the actual *Illumin* audience--real people interested in science and engineerings but not professional scientists and engineers. You will attempt to inform non-engineers about some aspect of engineering practice as it relate to people in their everyday lives. This is a magazine article and will be submitted for publication in *Illumin*.

III. Viterbi Conversations in Ethics Article (VCE) (100 points) with Peer Review (10 points)
- Examine the role of ethics in the practice of engineering. You are writing for an audience of your *professional* peers--in other words, engineers. This is a professional magazine article that will be submitted for publication in the Viterbi Coversations in Ethics (VCE) magazine.

IV. Heroic Engineering Project (100 points) with Rough Draft (50 points) and Panel Discussion (25 points)
- Research and report on a social, economic, or political problem and propose a solution that involves engineers or engineering. The project is collaborative and will be done in a small group. This assignment will be introduced early, so you will have the luxury of working on it all semester. The paper must also include an ethical component, whereby any ethical concerns regarding the use and/or misuse of the particular technology or product presented in your paper are considered (e.g., environmental effects, safety concerns, use of natural resources to manufacture the product, etc.). A discussion of any ethical considerations does not have to appear in each author's section but should appear somewhere in the paper as appropriate.
- For the panel discussion, you will have a thoughtful, interesting, relevant, and smooth discussion of your Heroic Engineering project topic. The format will be a panel discussion with a moderator asking questions and a team of panelists.

Assignments and Revisions, Portfolio | Final Exam, and the Late Work Policy

Assignments and Revisions
Work must be submitted in the proper dropbox by the due date and time indicated on the tentative course schedule or Blackboard. Plan accordingly. The directions on the assignment will indicate the required submission process. If a student receives an assessment rubric indicating three or more ratings of Needs Revision (R) and/or Did Not Meet Expectations (N), then the student has the opportunity to revise the Technical Description. The *Illumin* Article Paper, the Ethics Paper (VCE), and Heroic Engineering Project, however, are excluded from revision because revision is already incorporated in their respective composition process.
NOTE: Students have an opportunity to improve their grades, but submitting a revision does not guarantee a higher score. If a student meets the revision requirements, then the student will have ten days after the score has been posted on Blackboard to submit the revision. Revisions will be submitted using the same dropbox as the original submission.

Portfolio | Final Exam (200 points)
Requires a thoughtful, productive revision of both individual papers (i.e. *Illumin* Article Paper and Ethics Paper (VCE)). Superficial editorial revisions are not sufficient to qualify as a portfolio revision. You may not choose a whole new topic for the portfolio. However, the revision from graded draft to portfolio might be profound.

Late Work Policy
Late work will receive a 10% deduction for *each* day a work is submitted after the orginal deadline.

Assignment and Course Grades

This class calls on you to work independently as well as collaboratively. Please note there are assignments to assess your abilities both as an individual and as a member of a group. If you have a question about what collaboration, group projects, or individual work should look like, please do not hesitate to come see me.

Assignment	Effort	Weight
Major Assignments: ~~Technical Description~~, *Illumin* Article, Viterbi Conversations in Ethics Article, and Heroic Engineering	Individual and Group	50%
Oral/Panel Presentations: *Illumin* Article, and Heroic Engineering	Individual and Group	20%
Participation: Synchronous and Asynchronous Assignments	Individual and Group	5%
Peer Reviews: *Illumin* Article, Ethics Paper (VCE Article), and Heroic Engineering	Individual and Group	10%
**Portfolio	Final Exam**	Individual	15%

Final grades are computed by first finding the average score in each category described in the table. All scores are normalized to a scale of 0 to 100 before being averaged. The average score for each category is then used to compute the weighted average according to the weights in the table below. There is **no grading curve**.

Course grades will be assigned on the following scale:

Grading Scale	Grade
97% - 100%	A+
93% - 96%	A
90% - 92%	A-
87% - 89%	B+
83% - 86%	B
80% - 82%	B-
77% - 79%	C+
73% - 76%	C
70% - 72%	C-
67% - 69%	D+
63% - 66%	D
60% - 69%	D-
Below 60%	F

If I make a mistake in grading, I will be happy to correct it; please bring it to my attention as soon as possible. Please note, however, that grades are not negotiable, and that your GPA and academic standing are your responsibility, not mine.

Plagiarism, Academic Integrity, Note on Generative AI Tools, and Classroom Ethics

Plagiarism

Learning, research, and scholarship depend upon an environment of academic integrity and honesty. This environment can be maintained only when all participants recognize the importance of upholding the highest ethical standards. All student work, including quizzes, exams, reports, and papers must be the work of the individual receiving credit. As defined in the University Student Conduct Code (published in the current SCampus), plagiarism includes:

- "The submission of material authored by another person but represented as the student's own work, whether that material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near verbatim form;"
- "The submission of material subjected to editorial revision by another person that results in substantive changed in content or major alteration of writing style;" and, but not limited to, "Improper acknowledgment of sources in essays or papers."

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty also includes, for example, cheating on examinations or any assignment or having someone else take an examination or complete an assignment for you (or doing this for someone else). Violations of academic integrity will be referred to the *Office of Academic Integrity and Student Conduct*. One possible violation is the use of ChatGPT and other generative Artifical Intelligence (AI). These tools must be used judiciously and requires faculty consultation and approval. The impact on your grade will be determined by my policies in this course. Please familiarize yourself with the *USC Viterbi School of Engineering Academic Integrity Policy* (https://viterbischool. usc.edu/academic-integrity/), and speak to me if you have any questions about what is and is not allowed in this course. I am interested in your every success. Please see me before assignments are due with any questions or concerns.

Note on Generative AI Tools

Tools such as ChatGPT, DALL-E, and others are now part of the cultural landscape. As in your professional lives, there will be times when using these tools is appropriate and others when there is more benefit to not using them. We will work together to determine the opportunities and responsibilities of using these tools.

Some guiding principles in this class include:

- All work should be original and created specifically for the given assignment. You are responsible for the accuracy and originality of any material submitted.
- You should be the authors of all material submitted. In assignments that are collaborative in nature, that group of students will be the co-authors and have all associated responsibilities.
- Academic integrity policies regarding the use of generative AI tools will apply to every assignment.
- The extent to which using a generative AI tool is appropriate will be identified for each assignment. Please note that such use will differ for each assignment.
- Any generative AI text should be treated as source material and should be appropriately cited.
- Any generative AI image or graphic should be appropriately cited.

The appropriate citation style for each assignment will be provided by me. How to cite AI-generated text differs among the various methodologies, so please consult the latest version posted online.

Plagiarism, Academic Integrity, Note on Generative AI Tools, and Classroom Ethics (continued)

Classroom Ethics

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* (https://equity.usc.edu/) or to the *Department of Public Safety* (https://adminopsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/). This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community (i.e. friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member) can help initiate the report or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The *Center for Women and Men* https://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/ provides 24/7 confidential support, and the *Sexual Assault Resource Center* https://sarc.usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Writing Assistance and Other Support Systems

The *USC Writing Center* (https://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter/) provides writing assistance for all students by appointment, Monday through Thursday between the hours of 10:00am and 9:00pm (refer to the electronic link posted in the Campus Resources module on Blackboard for details and appointment scheduling). To ensure you can obtain an appointment with a writing specialist before your writing assignment is due, plan on scheduling your appointment several days in advance of completing your writing assignment.

Students who primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* (https://dornsife.usc.edu/ali), which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. the *Office of Disability Services and Programs* (https://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accomodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* (https://emergency.usc.edu/) will provide safety and other updates including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of Blackboard, Zoom, and other technology.

Any student requesting academic accomodations due to a disability is required to register with *Disability Services and Programs* (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accomodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as soon as possible. DSP is located in STU 301.

Tentative Course Schedule: Week One to Week Four

Specific instructions for each assignment will be given and ample warning will be given of any changes. The following course schedule is a broad outline of the course. Precise due dates, homework assignments, and more detailed plans will be given in class and on Blackboard.

NOTE: This schedule should be viewed as a living document: I will make adjustments as needed throughout the semester, and you should rely on Blackboard and verbal annoucements in class for due dates.

Weeks	General Subject	Due Dates and Times and Notes
WEEK ONE Janaury 8, 2024	Introduction to Course | Syllabus	
WEEK ONE January 10, 2024	Structure | *Illumin* Article Introduction | Readings	
WEEK ONE January 12, 2024	Structure | *llumin* Article (continued) | Readings (continued)	
WEEK TWO January 15, 2024	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day | NO CLASS	
WEEK TWO January 17, 2024	*Illumin* Article Workshop	
WEEK TWO January 19, 2024	*Illumin* Article Workshop	*Illumin* Article Rough Draft due by 11:59pm on Brightspace
WEEK THREE January 22, 2024	*Illumin* Article Conferences on Zoom | NO CLASS	*Note*: Use this time to work and revise the *Illumin* article and prepare for the oral presentation.
WEEK THREE January 24, 2024	*Illumin* Article Conferences on Zoom | NO CLASS	*Note*: Use this time to work and revise the *Illumin* article and prepare for the oral presentation.
WEEK THREE January 26, 2024	*Illumin* Article Conferences on Zoom (continued) | NO CLASS	*Note*: Use this time to work and revise the *Illumin* article and prepare for the oral presentation.
WEEK FOUR January 29, 2024	Heroic Engineering Introduction | *Illumin* Article Oral Presentation	
WEEK FOUR January 31, 2024	Heroic Engineering (continued) | *Illumin* Article Oral Presentation	
WEEK FOUR February 2, 2024	Heroic Engineering (continued) | *Illumin* Article Oral Presentation	Three topics for Heroic Engineering due in class

Tentative Course Schedule: Week Five to Week Nine

Specific instructions for each assignment will be given and ample warning will be given of any changes. The following course schedule is a broad outline of the course. Precise due dates, homework assignments, and more detailed plans will be given in class and on Blackboard.

NOTE: This schedule should be viewed as a living document: I will make adjustments as needed throughout the semester, and you should rely on Blackboard and verbal annoucements in class for due dates.

Weeks	General Subject	Due Dates and Times and Notes
WEEK FIVE February 5, 2024	Heroic Engineering Research	*Illumin* Oral Presentations (continued)	*Note*: Use outside class time to research and write first component of HE..
WEEK FIVE February 7, 2024	Heroic Engineering Research	*Illumin* Oral Presentations (continued)	*Note*: Use outside class time to research and write first component of HE..
WEEK FIVE February 9, 2024	Heroic Engineering Research	*Illumin* Oral Presentations (continued)	*Note*: Use outside class time to research and write first component of HE..
WEEK SIX February 12, 2024	*Illumin* Article Oral Presentations	*Note*: Use outside class time to research and write first component of HE..
WEEK SIX February 14, 2024	*Illumin* Article Oral Presentations (continued)	*Note*: Use outside class time to research and write first component of HE..
WEEK SIX February 16, 2024	*Illumin* Article Oral Presentations (continued)	*Note*: Use outside class time to research and write first component of HE..
WEEK SEVEN February 19, 2024	Presidents' Day	NO CLASS	
WEEK SEVEN February 21, 2024	*Illumin* Article Oral Presentations (continued)	Heroic Engineering	
WEEK SEVEN February 23, 2024	*Illumin* Article Oral Presentations (continued)	Heroic Engineering	Heroic Engineering	Part 1	Rough Draft due by 11:59pm on Brightspace
WEEK EIGHT February 26, 2024	Ethics and Intellectual Property	
WEEK EIGHT February 28, 2024	Ethics and Intellectual Property (continued)	
WEEK EIGHT March 1, 2024	Ethics and Intellectual Property (continued)	
WEEK NINE March 4, 2024	Ethics and Intellectual Property (continued)	
WEEK NINE March 6, 2024	Ethics and Intellectual Property (continued)	

Tentative Course Schedule; Week Ten to Week Thirteen

Specific instructions for each assignment will be given and ample warning will be given of any changes. The following course schedule is a broad outline of the course. Precise due dates, homework assignments, and more detailed plans will be given in class and on Blackboard.

NOTE: This schedule should be viewed as a living document: I will make adjustments as needed throughout the semester, and you should rely on Blackboard and verbal annoucements in class for due dates.

Weeks	General Subject	Due Dates and Times and Notes
WEEK NINE March 8, 2024	Ethics and Intellectual Property (continued)	
WEEK TEN March 11, 2024	Spring Break 2024 | NO CLASS	VCE Rough Draft due by 11:59pm on Brightspace *Note*: Work to revise your Ethics Paper (VCE Article) and research and write the second component of HE.
WEEK TEN March 13, 2024	Spring Break 2024 | NO CLASS	*Note*: Work to revise your Ethics Paper (VCE Article) and research and write the second component of HE.
WEEK TEN March 15, 2024	Spring Break 2024 | NO CLASS	*Note*: Work to revise your Ethics Paper (VCE Article) and research and write the second component of HE.
WEEK ELEVEN March 18, 2024	Ethics | Individual Conferences via Zoom | NO CLASS | Heroic Engineering | Technical Writing | Ethics	*Note*: Work to revise your Ethics Paper (VCE Article) and research and write the second component of HE.
WEEK ELEVEN March 20, 2024	Ethics | Individual Conferences via Zoom | NO CLASS | Heroic Engineering | Technical Writing | Ethics (continued)	Heroic Engineering | Part 2 | Rough Draft due by 11:59pm on Brightspace
WEEK ELEVEN March 22, 2024	Ethics | Individual Conferences via Zoom | NO CLASS | Heroic Engineering | Technical Writing | Ethics (continued)	
WEEK TWELVE March 25, 2024	Ethics (continued) | Heroic Engineering | Technical Writing | Improv Training TBD	Ethics Paper (VCE Article) Final Draft due by 11:59pm on Brightspace
WEEK TWELVE March 27, 2024	Heroic Engineering | Technical Writing | Improv Training TBD	
WEEK TWELVE March 29, 2024		Heroic Engineering | Section 3 | Rough Draft due by 11:59pm on Brightspace

Tentative Course Schedule: Week Fourteen to Week Seventeen (Finals)

Specific instructions for each assignment will be given and ample warning will be given of any changes. The following course schedule is a broad outline of the course. Precise due dates, homework assignments, and more detailed plans will be given in class and on Blackboard.

NOTE: This schedule should be viewed as a living document: I will make adjustments as needed throughout the semester, and you should rely on Blackboard and verbal annoucements in class for due dates.

Weeks	General Subject	Due Dates and Times and Notes
WEEK THIRTEEN April 3, 2024	Heroic Engineering (continued)	Heroic Engineering Panel Discussions TBD
WEEK THIRTEEN April 5, 2024	Heroic Engineering (continued)	Heroic Engineering Panel Discussions TBD
WEEK FOURTEEN April 8, 2024	Heroic Engineering (continued)	Heroic Engineering Panel Discussions TBD
WEEK FOURTEEN April 10, 2024	Portfolio | Heroic Engineering	
WEEK FOURTEEN April 12, 2024	Portfolio | Heroic Engineering (continued)	
WEEK FIFTEEN April 15, 2024	Portfolio | Heroic Engineering (continued)	
WEEK FIFTEEN April 17, 2024	Portfolio } Heroic Engineering (continued)	
WEEK FIFTEEN April 19, 2024	Last Day of Spring 2024	Heroic Engineering Final Draft due by 11:59pm on Blackboard
WEEK SIXTEEN (Reading Week) April 22, 2024	Porfolio Revision | NO CLASS	
WEEK SIXTEEN (Reading Week) April 24, 2024	Porfolio Revision | NO CLASS	
WEEK SIXTEEN (Reading Week) April 26, 2024	Porfolio Revision | NO CLASS	
WEEK SEVENTEEN (Finals Week) April 29, 2024	NO CLASS	Portfolio due by 11:59pm on Brightspace
WEEK SEVENTEEN (Finals Week) May 1, 2024	NO CLASS	
WEEK SEVENTEEN (Finals Week) May 3, 2024	NO CLASS	End of Finals