# ENGIN 351: Writing in Engineering – Fall 2023 Syllabus

**Course Instructor: James Marinelli *(he/him)*** [**jamesmarinel@umass.edu**](mailto:jamesmarinel@umass.edu)

Email is the best way to reach me. Allow 24 hours for a response.

Office Hours: Wednesdays 8:00 -10:00 am **(**[**on Zoom**](https://us05web.zoom.us/j/5825326308?pwd=VmJOak9rMUNXbnZwRlFId3dreXh2dz09)**).** Other times by advance appointment.

Please note that if I am meeting with another student, you may have to wait a short period of time in the Waiting Room.

**Zoom ID:** 582 532 6306

# COURSE INFORMATION

Welcome! This course fulfills the university’s Junior Year Writing requirement for engineering students. In this class, you will be introduced to traditional technical and scientific writing forms including outlines, summaries, visual and graphical representations of data, and more. Presentations and research are significant components of this course.

# COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this class, you will learn and practice:

* why strong writing and communication skills are fundamental to success in engineering,
* what constitutes “good” technical writing (through reading, writing, and discussing samples),
* how to perform preliminary writing steps, such as required research and first drafts,
* how to compose and revise your technical writing, presentations, and posters,
* what constitutes professionalism in your correspondence, presentations, and interactions.

# REQUIRED TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGIES

You must have regular access to the internet and to a device that facilitates reading and writing online. There is ***no required textbook,*** but there will be materials and readings posted on Moodle. You will be expected to bring these into class (laptop/tablet or hard copy is fine). Additionally, it is recommended that you bring a laptop or tablet with you on our peer review days.

# WRITING RESOURCES

There are many resources for you to use. [Purdue *OWL*](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl)and UNC Chapel Hill’s [Resources](https://writingcenter.unc.edu/esl/resources/) and [Tips & Tools](https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/) pages are great starting points. You may also visit the [UMass Writing Center](https://umass.mywconline.com/) (free to all students, faculty, and staff!) to chat with a tutor about your writing, regardless of what stage you might be at in the writing process.

# ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

All major assignments and the extra credit will be submitted via Moodle and all feedback and grades will also be communicated via Moodle. In general, assignments will be graded in the order that they were submitted. Students may submit an assignment as early as they wish.  
  
**Evaluation**

When grading each of your assignments, I will ask one core question: *Does this document do its job successfully*? In other words, would your communication have its intended effect on the reader you are addressing? I will, of course, recognize the difference between a competent performance (a C) and good and excellent performances (B and A). A competent performance is one that stands a chance of succeeding; an excellent performance is one that seems assured not only of success but also of winning praise.

**A: Superior**. The work is of near professional quality. The document meets or exceeds all the objectives of the assignment. The content is mature, thorough, and suited for the audience; the style is clear, accurate, and forceful; the information is well-organized and designed so that it is accessible and attractive; the mechanics and grammar are correct.

**B: Good.** The document meets the objectives of the assignment, but it needs improvement in style. It may also contain easily correctable errors in grammar, format, or content. Its content may also be superficial.

**C: Competent.** The document needs significant improvement in concept, details, development, organization, grammar, or format. It may be formally correct but superficial in content.

**D. Marginally acceptable.** The document meets some of the objectives but ignores others; the content is inadequately developed, or it contains numerous or major errors.

**F: Unacceptable.** The document does not have enough information, does something other than the assignment required, or contains major or excessive errors.

**Grading Scale:** 100-94 A; 93-91 A-; 90-88 B+; 87-84 B; 83-81 B-; 80-78 C+; 76-74 C; 73-71 C-; 70-

68 D+; 67-64 D; 63-0 F.

Unless otherwise stated, you will always receive an exact percentage for your grade when you submit an assignment (for example, an 88% instead of a B+).  
  
**Grade Breakdown**  
Participation: 10%

Homework: 10%

Resume/Cover letter 10%

Article Summary 10%

Proposal 10%

Poster Presentation 10%

Annotated Bibliography 10%

Final Project Presentation 10%

Final Paper 20%

# MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

**Article Summary**: We will focus on how to outline and understand an author’s article in order to create a descriptive summary. Throughout the semester, I will assign you relatively short pieces, so you have material to summarize for this assignment.

**Resume and Cover Letter:** This unit consists of a resume, a cover letter, and the job advertisement being targeted by those materials.

**Technical Poster**: This is the one group project. Your group will pick an engineering topic and present it to the class using a poster as your visual aid. We will discuss conventions and best practices for creating posters.

**Topic Proposal:** We will study the conventions of proposals and you will create a proposal in which you propose the topic of your final report.  
  
**Final Report:** This is a 10-page report on an engineering topic that you choose. There are parameters on what the topic can be to ensure that it is appropriate for junior and senior engineering students.

**Annotated bibliography:** This is an opportunity for you to do academic level research on your final report topic. We will study what an annotated bibliography is and what it does, and you will create one with ten sources. When you’ve completed this assignment, you will have most of your research done for your final report.

**All due date times are 11:59pm local UMass Amherst time or EST unless otherwise noted.** You should plan on spending roughly 5-8 hours per week working on assignments and reading for our class. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you are having difficulties accessing any information on Moodle.

# POLICIES

**Attendance:** 351 students are entitled to 2 undocumented absences (illness, personal/professional conflict, etc.). Across all sections, students who miss more than 6 classes may not pass the course except under significantly rare, documented, and special circumstances. Students are also expected to attend class for the full class period; regularly arriving late or leaving early will impact your participation grade.

If you find that there is something that is significantly impacting your ability to attend class, please consult with me ASAP to make arrangements.

**Late Work:** In general, work should be completed and submitted on time, and work that is received over one week late (without prior arrangement) will only be accepted for a maximum of half credit. If something is impacting your ability to submit assignments on time, please contact me ASAP.

**Academic Honesty:** All work submitted must be your individual, unique work unless the assignment explicitly requires collaboration. You may (in fact, I encourage it!) receive writing support, but that help should not include someone else providing sentences, paragraphs, source summaries, or reading summaries written by someone else OR taken from someone else. You may also not submit any work for this class that is currently being graded in another course. Finally, a References page alone does not satisfy the attribution expectation. We will discuss how to cite materials in class.  
  
**Incompletes:** A student is eligible for an INC if they request the INC *when they are passing the course* AND some circumstance beyond their control prevents them from finishing the course on time AND we have agreed on a plan for completion. INC grades are reserved for extreme circumstances.

**Communication:** I will communicate with you all through Moodle and email (and if we set up an online meeting, Zoom). You are welcome to communicate with your colleagues however you see fit, provided everyone is comfortable with it.

**Participation:** Regular class participation is crucial to success in this course. Not only will it help you think through ideas and learn other perspectives, but participation also creates a learning community. Supporting a safe learning community means taking care with comments made in discussions, in comments to peers during peer review, and during feedback. Participation looks differently for different people, and whether that is being engaged in our class discussions, taking time to thoroughly engage with our materials, or supporting your colleagues’ writing, I ask that everyone shows up to the best of their abilities and with only good intentions.

**Accommodations:** I am committed to making our course accessible to all students. Should anyone have any concerns about the accessibility of the course or its materials, I would be happy to meet with you. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with the [Office of Disability Services](http://www.umass.edu/disability/) and meet with me at the start of the semester to discuss accommodations.

**Inclusion:** In this course, each voice in the classroom has something of value to contribute. Please take care to respect the different experiences, beliefs and values expressed by students and staff involved in this course. We support UMass Amherst’s commitment to diversity, and welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, citizenships, disability, sex, education, ethnicities, family statuses, genders, gender identities, geographical locations, languages, military experience, political views, races, religions, sexual orientations, socioeconomic statuses, and work experiences. Relatedly, everyone has the right to be addressed and referred to by the name and pronouns that correspond to their gender identity, including the use of nonbinary and neo- pronouns.

**Statement on English as a Global Language:** Though this course will be carried out in a Standard Academic English (SAE), I recognize that not everyone’s relationship to this language is the same. Some of you may consider English to be a first language, and some people may bring other language backgrounds and abilities to the class. This course recognizes that there are many different types of English, each with their own cultural history and relationship to power. I encourage each of you to be open and inviting to how others practice English in this class, and to think of this class as an opportunity to reflect on your own language use in relation to others. We will discuss what this means in more detail throughout our semester.  
  
**Learning in the Context of COVID-19:** Because we are (still) living through a pandemic, there are surely going to be circumstances (foreseen and unforeseen) that may complicate your workflow and learning processes. Communication is critical here: please keep me updated should challenges arise related to caretaking obligations or illness. Your health and well-being is always the priority. For everyone’s safety and peace of mind, I ask that you stay home if you are sick and get tested if you believe that you may have been exposed to or contracted COVID-19.  
  
**Recording/Distribution of Materials:** Distribution or copying of course materials (in any media/medium) without written consent of the instructor is prohibited. This policy also applies to submitted student work/projects and discussion posts.