Course Description

Provides instructions on how to design, write and test a manual. The course focuses on the principles used in writing technical manuals, the document process, design and drafting procedures, and finally, testing and revising the manual. Lecture 3 hours per week.

Course Purpose

The purpose of this course is to help students develop the skills requested by employers in computer and other technical fields where the writing of user manuals is a vital part of selling, developing and maintaining products and job procedures.

Course Prerequisites/Co-requisites

Prerequisites are ENG 112, ENG 125 or division approval.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:
- Describe the principles of writing technical user manuals
- Describe the document process
- Gather information needed for the content of user manuals
- Organize and design the layout of user manuals
- Develop the typical parts of a user manual
- Test and revise draft manuals

Major Topics to be Included

A. Principles of writing technical user manuals

B. The document process
   1. Document need assessment
   2. Audience, purpose, scope and design analysis

C. Gathering information required as the basis for user manuals

D. Designing user manuals
   1. Document planner checklist
   2. Content outline
   3. Layout and design

E. Drafting user manuals
   1. Introduction
   2. Step-by-step instructions
   3. Problem-solving chart
   4. Glossary
   5. Table of Contents
   6. Cover and title page

F. Testing and revising draft user manuals
   1. Composing a usability test
   2. Assessing a draft manual
   3. Revising a draft manual based on an assessment
   4. Interviewing sample users