Technical Writing and Communication (BS)

Major Academic Director: Necia Werner (BH 245L); Undergraduate Academic Coordinator: Laura Donaldson (BH 259)

The B.S. in Technical Writing and Communication helps majors to develop communications skills needed in the current workplace, as well as the analytic and problem-solving skills needed to understand technological change and new and emerging media. Because writers need both general knowledge and in-depth expertise on the subjects they write about, majors are encouraged to use their elective course options to sample broadly and choose courses that develop their content knowledge in subjects they are interested in writing about.

The major has two “tracks”: Technical Communication (TC) and Science & Medical Communication (SMC). Both tracks begin with a set of prerequisite courses in statistics, mathematical sciences, and computer science, and are complemented by foundational courses in writing and communication design for print and online environments. The TC track has specialized courses focusing on instructional and explanatory writing, usability, planning & testing, and new media; graduates typically work in software and technology firms as software documentation specialists, content developers, information architects, or instructional designers. The SMC track should appeal to students with interests in the health care professions, science and public policy, patient education, scientific journalism and related fields; the track includes specialized courses in science and healthcare communication, as well as usability and writing for new media with electives in the sciences or engineering.

Majors should complement their academic study with communications-related internships and relevant experience through campus activities and publications such as The Tartan and The Triple Helix. Both welcome student writers, editors, and information designers. Majors are also encouraged to seek funding for SURG and SURF projects with a technical communication focus, and to do a senior honors thesis. Majors can also apply to the department’s accelerated master’s program, the MAPW 4+1, where they can complete an M.A. in Professional Writing in only one year.

Below is a suggested schedule for the first 2 years for a Primary Major. It is also available as an Additional Major and a Minor.

The remainder of the Major and GenEd can be completed in the junior and senior year.

1st semester

- 76-101, Interpretation & Argument
- Complete 1: 79-104, Global Histories 36-201 or 36-200, Statistics Freshman Seminar
- 99-101 or 99-102, C@CM
- xx-xxx, Elective**
- xx-xxx, Elective**
- xx-xxx, Elective**

2nd semester

- Complete 2: 79-104, Global Histories 36-201 or 36-200, Statistics Freshman Seminar
- xx-xxx, Elective**
- xx-xxx, Elective**
- xx-xxx, Elective**

3rd semester

- 76-26x, Survey of Forms***
- 76-271, Introduction to Professional & Technical Writing
- 76-300, Professional Seminar*
- xx-xxx, Elective**
- xx-xxx, Elective**
- xx-xxx, Elective**

4th semester

- 76-xxx, One TC or SMC course**
- 76-390, Style
- xx-xxx, Elective**
- xx-xxx, Elective**
- xx-xxx, Elective**

*76-101 must be completed prior to taking English Core Courses.

**Elective: This space can be used for a pre-requisite course, another GenEd course, major course, or for a course you are interested in. One mathematics course is required: 21-111, 21-112, 21-120, 21-127, 21-122, 21-256, or 21-259. Computer science programming course(s) are required according to the Track chosen: TC=15-110 & 15-112; SMC=15-110. Courses can also be taken for the Technical Communication Electives for the TC Track or Natural Science & Engineering courses for the SMC Track.

***Complete One Survey of Forms Course: 76-260, 76-262, 76-265, 76-269.

*76-300, Professional Seminar (3 units) is highly recommended but not required. This weekly seminar introduces students to career options in professional and technical writing.