SJSU SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Science · Computer Science

Technical Writing Workshop

CS 100W

Fall 2026 Section 05 In Person 3 Unit(s) 08/19/2026 to 12/07/2026 Modified 09/01/2026

Contact Information

Craig Jones

Office Hours

Friday, 3:00-5:00pm, or by appointment

Email: craig.jones@sjsu.edu

Office: SPX 170

Phone: N/A

Course Information

Class Day and Time:

Tues/Thurs 10:30a.m. – 11:45a.m.

Classroom: MacQuarrie Hall 234

Course Description and Requisites

Advanced writing through preparation of technical reports and presentations. Improving skills for writing subject-related reports, project proposals and personal resumes through practice and evaluation. Course assignments will be related to issues concerning careers in computer science.

Satisfies Writing in the Disciplines (WID).

Prerequisite(s): A3 or equivalent second semester composition course (with a grade of C- or better); completion of core GE; and upper division standing. Or Graduate or Postbaccalaureate level. Allowed Declared Majors: Computer Science, Data Science, Computer Science and Linguistics, or Mathematics.
Grading: Letter Graded

Note(s): Must be passed with C or better to satisfy the CSU Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR).

Classroom Protocols

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc., can be found on the Canvas Learning Management System course login website at http://sjsu.instructure.com.

You are responsible for regularly checking Canvas to learn of any updates. Additionally, the **Turnitin.com** plagiarism-checking tool is an integral part of Canvas. When activated by the instructor, it will check your assignments for plagiarism automatically.

Housekeeping:

- All assignments should be uploaded to Canvas.
- No eating of meals or snacks while in lecture.
- Please observe common-sense rules of decorum when in lecture. You are expected to play an active role in class discussions.

Program Information

Writing in the Disciplines (WID) courses develop students' abilities to communicate effectively in their major course of study and in their careers. With an emphasis on critical thinking, these upper-division core courses advance students' understanding of the genres, audiences, and purposes of college writing while preparing them for successful communication in their chosen professions. Completing Writing in the Disciplines with a C or better is an SJSU graduation requirement.

Writing in the Disciplines Learning Outcomes Upon successful completion of a Writing in the Disciplines course, students should be able to:

1. explain, analyze, develop, and critique ideas effectively, including ideas encountered in multiple readings and expressed in different forms of discourse;
2. organize and develop complete discipline-specific texts and other documents for both professional and general audiences, using appropriate editorial and citation standards; and
3. locate, organize, and synthesize information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose, and to communicate that purpose in writing;
4. produce discipline-specific written work that demonstrates upper-division proficiency in language use, grammar, and clarity of expression.

Writing Practice: Students will write a minimum of 8000 words, at least 4000 of which must be in revised final draft form.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Upon successful completion of CS100W, students should be able to:

1. Understand how to follow the stages of the writing process (prewriting/writing/rewriting) and apply them to technical and workplace writing tasks.
2. Produce a set of documents related to technical and workplace writing tasks and have improved their ability to write clearly and accurately.
3. Understand the basic components of definitions, descriptions, process explanations, and other common forms of technical writing.
4. Define basic technical writing elements, such as audience analysis, use of jargon and visuals, and citation, formatting and presentation.
5. Read, understand, and interpret material (based on primary and secondary research) related to advanced technology, and have an appreciation for some of the ideas, issues, and problems involved in writing about technology and in workplace writing.
6. Understand basic sources and methods of research and documentation on topics in technology, including online research, and synthesize and integrate material from primary and secondary sources in a research-based technical writing project.
7. Determine the difference between plagiarized and non-plagiarized text.

Course Materials

1: *Technical Writing Essentials: Introduction to Professional Communications in Technical Fields*, by Suzan Last, Candice Neveu, and Monika Smith. - open source textbook, available for free.
2: *Business Communication Essentials*, 8th Ed., by Courtland L. Bovee and John V. Thill (Older edition would be ok).

Other materials may be referred to during lecture; citations will be provided.

Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit [45-hours per 1-unit of credit] (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found by visiting University Policy S12-3 or using the link http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf.

Assignment	Learning Outcomes	Percentage of grade	Word count	Due dates
In-class writing exercises (4)	GELO 1, 2, 3, 4; CLO 1, 2, 4, 5, 6	20%	500 ea.	Various
Presentation	CLO 4, 5	10%	Oral (c. 750)	Various

Critical Analysis of a CS-related, peer-reviewed journal article	GELO 1, 2, 3, 4; CLO 1, 2, 4, 5, 6	10%	1,000	October 29
Persuasive language exercise	GELO 1, 2, 3, 4; CLO 1, 2, 4, 5, 6	10%	1,000	November 5
Interview Project	GELO 1, 2, 3; CLO 4, 5, 6	10%	1,000	November 19
Research paper	GELO 1, 2, 3, 4; CLO 1, 2, 4, 5, 6	30%	2,500	December 3
Final exam		10%	Variable (c. 1,200)	Thursday, December 10, 10:45-12:45pm

✓ Grading Information

Grade	Range	Notes
A-	90-92.5	
B	83-86.5	
C+	77-79.5	
C-	70-72.5	

D	63-66.5	
59 or Below	F	

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9 (PDF) (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the Syllabus Information (https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

Date	Topics, Assignments, Deadlines
8/20	Introduction to the course
8/25	Technical communications: conventions and characteristics
8/27	Technical communication as solution
9/1	Task and audience analysis
9/3	Writing cover letters
9/8	Plagiarism, and how to avoid it
9/10	Oral presentations
9/15	Research I: Basic principles
9/17	Research II: Skills and resources

9/22	Research III: Research ethics
9/24	Writer-centered and reader-centered writing
9/29	**Presentations: Session I**
10/1	**Presentations: Session II**
10/6	Communicating with precision
10/8	**Presentations: Session III**
10/13	**Presentations: Session IV**
10/15	Writing to persuade
10/20	The importance of verbs
10/22	Document design I: Readability, headings, lists
10/27	Document design II: Figures and tables, and enhancing readability
10/29	Citation and documentation in IEEE style
11/3	Resumes
11/5	Teamwork I: Project management tools and strategies
11/10	Teamwork II: Models for understanding team dynamics
11/12	Teamwork III: Collaborative writing and managing group conflict
11/17	Common document types I
11/19	Research paper clinic

11/24	THANKSGIVING – NO LECTURE
11/26	Common document types II
12/1	Exam multiple choice drill session
12/3	Exam revision session

Schedule is subject to change with notice.

Late Work and Missed Work Policy

On submission dates, students have until 11:59pm to submit their work to Canvas. While I am open to the issuing of short extensions for individual pieces of work based on need, requests for such extensions must be submitted on email no later than 24 hours before the deadline. Rewrites are not accepted. Late work may not be accepted, with the exception of the larger assignments (quantitative analysis, interview with an engineer), which may be submitted up to five days late, but which will incur a penalty of 10% for each day (or part of each day) that they are late. As an example, a quantitative analysis submitted 36 hours after the deadline will be awarded a *maximum* grade of 80%.

It is generally not possible to reschedule presentations. Non-attendance on the scheduled day of your presentation will result in an automatic grade of 0%.

Assignment Length Policy

While the estimated number of pages for a given assignment may be indicated as a way of giving a quick and easy impression of the amount of work entailed, **students should ensure that their work conforms to the word length** specified for each assignment. A 10% tolerance is applied to each word length, meaning that students can produce anywhere between 90% and 110% of the specified length for their assignments without incurring a penalty. Therefore, for an assignment that specifies, say, a length of 1,000 words, students may submit anywhere between 900 and 1,100 words. Any work submitted below or above these limits is liable to be penalized for length.

The reasoning behind this is to ensure that students both know how to produce work of a given length, and also that they are able to exercise brevity and edit their own work down to length where necessary, skills which are useful in the work sector. In highly exceptional circumstances, the penalty for assignments that are too short or too long may be waived, if the instructor feels the work submitted is of a sufficiently high quality to do so.

Diversity Statement

CS 100W intends to create an inclusive environment for students of different backgrounds. Instructors and students are expected to respect and appreciate the diverse backgrounds of all class members. Students in CS 100W will also explore diversity issues by examining environmental justice matters and social, ethical, and civic impacts of scientific inquiries. Students are encouraged to discuss any diversity questions or concerns with their instructors.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity Policy

San José State University Policy F15-7 on academic integrity defines plagiarism as "the act of representing the work of another as one's own without giving appropriate credit, regardless of how that work was obtained, and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements." Student submissions with plagiarism will automatically receive a zero grade, and cannot be rewritten for credit. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development.

Policy Regarding the Use of AI

Students in CS 100W are expected to produce their own work based on critical thinking, problem solving skills, and learning. Any work generated by AI (such as ChatGPT) cannot be accepted as students' own work. Students may not submit any AI-generated text and claim it as their own. CS 100W instructors will check the AI score in the Turnitin.com report for student submissions, and may refuse to accept a student's submission as the student's own work based on the AI score in Turnitin.com and the instructor's investigation of the situation. Inappropriate use of AI in students' work will be considered academic misconduct, and will be subject to disciplinary action stated in SJSU's Academic Integrity Policy. CS 100W instructors will discuss with their classes about how to use AI tools to facilitate learning in an appropriate manner that does not violate academic honesty and integrity principles and policies. If students have any questions about appropriate use of AI tools, they should discuss with their instructors.

How Can You Avoid Plagiarism?

To avoid plagiarism, you must give credit whenever you:

Use someone else's direct words (use quotation marks around exact words that you are quoting—and give source at end of quotation marks)

"In the midst of Silicon Valley and all over the globe, SJSU engineers are designing and building high impact innovations, with a particular focus on challenges to global sustainability." (Wei, 2011)

The full reference will be in the back of the report, using IEEE format.

Use someone else's ideas, in your words, that are not common knowledge

Through the Global Technology Initiative at SJSU, 25 students are selected each year to travel for two weeks to India or China, all expenses paid by GTI. (College of Engineering, 2012). (Note this is not the exact words, so there are no quotation marks.) The full reference and website will be in the back of the report,

using IEEE format.

Use specific statistics, graphs, drawings, that are not yours

College of Engineering, San Jose State University, is ranked 2nd overall among the West's top public universities offering bachelor's and master's degrees according to the 2013 edition of "American's Best Colleges" (U.S. News & World Report, 2013).

San Jose State University is ranked 8th overall among the West's top public universities offering bachelor's and master's degrees according to the 2013 edition of "American's Best Colleges" (U.S. News & World Report, 2013).

Self work

One should cite his or her own (or co-authored) work. If your company has copyrighted work that you or your team have written as part of your job, or you share a patent, or have previously published material that you have written, credit must be still given. There are times permission from the company must also be given. Please check with both your company and your instructor.

Plagiarism will result in a grade of F in CS100W. **Papers with plagiarism cannot be rewritten for credit. Your Department Chairperson will be notified.** We will work on this in class. **Remember, plagiarism is a serious issue.** Learning proper documentation is one of the key goals of CS100W.