This online course will provide you with hands-on experience common to the field of technical writing, which will help you broaden your skill set and emerge with some great new writing samples for your writing portfolio! You will also explore the following questions and issues:

- Why is rhetoric widely considered to be the starting point and foundation of the field of technical writing? What are the core components and principles of rhetoric and how do they influence the thinking, decision making, and strategies of technical writers?
- What is technical writing? How is the field unique? How can it remain relevant despite constant changes in communication and technology?
- What problems do technical writers typically or atypically resolve? How can resolving these problems become a way for them to demonstrate their value?
- Why is it critical for technical writers to learn about the culture of an organization and the context of each documentation project?
- What are typical stages of the composing process for workplace writers (including research, analysis, planning, problem solving, drafting, evaluation, and revision) and what why are skills in management, collaboration, and negotiation so important to what technical writers do? What are special challenges and rewards for this kind of work, and what do workplace writers need to do to be successful in their jobs and career?

The following are likely assignments for this course:

- **Class discussions** (in the Discussion Forum) and **individual responses** centering on a single question (prompt) that encourages critical and creative thinking based on assigned readings (15%)
- **A Specialty Project** in the form of a PowerPoint presentation that allows you to teach the class about a topic of personal or professional interest to you (15%)
- **An argument “essay”** that provides your own perspective about how best to define “technical communication,” describe what technical communicators do, assess their potential contributions and value to organizations, and consider how they can research and overcome organizational constraints that can put at risk their success (25%)
- **Individual completion of 4 tasks common in the field.** These will probably include a PowerPoint presentation/script aimed at informing a target audience about a social or civic problem; two consumer guides aimed at informing two different audiences about how a medication helps with a medical disorder; a substantial revision of hard copy or digital document; and writing, testing, and revising a procedural manual. Each of these assignments will require submitting two drafts (40%)

Likely textbooks will include:

- **Writing a Professional Life: Stories of Technical Communicators On and Off the Job.**
  Gerald Savage and Dale Sullivan. Allyn & Bacon, 2001
- A textbook in the field that focuses on strategies we will be discussing in the course. I will decide shortly which textbook to order for the course.

I look forward to working with you in the spring! Rachel Spilka