Tompkins Cortland Community College

Master Course Syllabus

Course Discipline and Number: CSS 212 **Year: 2025-2026**

Course Title: Help Desk and User Support **Credit Hours: 3**

I. Course Description:

This course prepares a student to work in a Help Desk/Tech Support environment. Students in CSS 212 will have the opportunity to work with the College's Help Desk for 2 hours/week for 14 weeks where they will assist staff on 'Tier One Support' issues. Topics will include learning office procedures while developing their interpersonal and decision-making skills. Students will learn to research and repair technology-related issues, including writing Knowledge Base Articles with their solutions. Students will develop skills to manage multiple tasks with frequent interruptions, occasionally in urgent situations, and will explore ethical questions in technology support. Prerequisites: CSS 112; prior completion of, or concurrent enrollment in, ENGL100 or ESL 120, 121, and 122 required by placement. 3 Cr. (2 Lec., 2 Lab.) Fall semester.

II. Additional Course Information:

1. CSS 212 is required for degree completion in the Computer Support Specialist. A. A. S.
2. Students must have access to a computer with Windows, Mac OSX, or Linux installed. ChromeBooks and iPads are not appropriate for this course.
3. All software and tools used in the course are free (some free trials).
4. This course is offered in Fall semesters, both in-person and remote asynchronous. Students may choose to participate in both delivery modes (online flex) throughout the semester.

III. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the user support model in Information Technology.
2. Demonstrate trouble shooting, critical thinking, research, and problem-solving skills.
3. Evaluate current technologies and end user experience.
4. Demonstrate the technical, ethical, and interpersonal skills needed to function in a diverse, cooperative environment.
5. Demonstrate safe work habits, the use of appropriate safety equipment and behaviors, and reporting of unsafe conditions.

IV. Tompkins Cortland Institutional Learning Outcomes; Program Learning Outcomes; SUNY General Education Outcomes

Tompkins Cortland ILOs – N/A

Complete this section for "service" courses only (e.g. courses that are required of all students; courses that are not program specific but satisfy liberal arts requirements; or commonly used in multiple academic programs to meet non-program-specific requirements). Check only Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) that are meaningfully developed and assessed in this course. For each ILO chosen, include the SLO to which it aligns.

Students will:

☐ Communicate effectively, in oral and written forms, taking into consideration audience and purpose.

☐ Apply principles and methods of scientific inquiry and quantitative reasoning appropriate to their discipline.

☐ Use information, critical thinking, and the creative process to solve problems and reach conclusions.

☐ Use technology appropriate to their discipline.

☐ Describe the ways in which social, economic, or environmental sustainability depends on their own and the collective contributions of a diversity of ideas and people.

Program Learning Outcomes

Complete this section for program-specific courses (e.g. those that share the same 4 letter designation as the academic program or satisfy requirements in related programs).

Specify the Academic Program: **Computer Support Specialist A.A.S.**

PLO 2) Develop and apply creative troubleshooting techniques to diagnose hardware/software/network problems
SLO 2) Demonstrate trouble shooting, critical thinking, research, and problem-solving skills.

PLO 3) Communicate technical concepts in both written and verbal formats, appropriate for audience skill level.
SLO 4) Demonstrate the technical, ethical, and interpersonal skills needed to function in a diverse, cooperative environment.

SUNY General Education Outcomes –N/A

If this course **assesses** a SUNY GEN ED Outcome, check all that apply and indicate which course outcome(s) address each checked item:

☐ CRITICAL THINKING - Students will:

a. identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments as they occur in their own or others' work; and
b. develop well-reasoned arguments.

☐ INFORMATION MANAGEMENT - Students will:

a. perform the basic operations of personal computer use;
b. understand and use basic research techniques; and
c. locate, evaluate and synthesize information from a variety of sources.

☐ GENERAL EDUCATION CATEGORY - Area(s): **N/A**
For courses that are approved to meet one (or more) of the ten SUNY General Education categories, indicate which category the course fulfills, and which outcome(s) are aligned with the SUNY outcomes for that category.

☐ This course does not address any of the above Tompkins Cortland ILOs, PLOs, or SUNY General Education Competencies or Knowledge and Skills Areas.

V. Essential Topics/Themes

1. The evolution of the “Help Desk” in Information Technology, and how that informs the current Help Desk.
2. “Real life” Help Desk/Technology Support situations
3. Applying lessons learned in the classroom.
4. Tools and software to support the Help Desk role.
5 Multiple forms of media to convey information to users.
6. Decision making, conflict resolution and critical thinking.

VI. Methods of Assessment/Evaluation

Method	% Course Grade
1. Interactive Learning Activities	10 - 25%
2. Module Assignments	0 - 25%
3. Lab Activities	10 - 50%
4. Final Project	10 - 50%

VII. Texts – ☐ Required ☒ Recommended ☐ Used for more than one course (list courses)

High school instructors may consult with staff in the CollegeNow office for additional information and guidance.

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1. *Specific urls?*	☒

VII. Bibliography of Supplemental Materials

1. iStudy for Success, Penn State, https://istudy.psu.edu/
2. Skills You Need, https://www.skillsyouneed.com/
3. Effective Help Desk Specialist Skills 1st Edition, Darrill Gibson
4. Running an Effective Help Desk, 2nd Edition, Barbara Czegal

Editions listed are current as of date of syllabus. More recent editions may be used.

Other Learning Resources

Audiovisual: None specified

Electronic: None specified

Other: None specified

Attendance Policy: *To maintain good grades, regular attendance in class is necessary. Absence from class is considered a serious matter and absence never excuses a student from class work. It is the responsibility of all instructors to distribute reasonable attendance policies in writing during the first week of class. Students are required to comply with the attendance policy set by each of their instructors. Students are not penalized if they are unable to attend classes or participate in exams on particular days because of religious beliefs, in accordance with Chapter 161, Section 224-a of the Education Law of the State of New York. Students who plan to be absent from classroom activity for religious reasons should discuss the absence in advance with their instructors. See college catalog for more information.*

Services for Students with Disabilities: *It is the College's policy to provide, on an individual basis, appropriate academic adjustments for students with disabilities, which may affect their ability to fully participate in program or course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Coordinator of Access and Equity Services, to discuss their particular need for academic adjustments. All course materials are available in*

alternate formats upon request.

Academic Integrity: *Every student at Tompkins Cortland Community College is expected to act in an academically honest fashion in all aspects of their academic work: in writing papers and reports, in taking examinations, in performing laboratory experiments and reporting the results, in clinical and cooperative learning experiences, and in attending to paperwork such as registration forms.*
Any written work submitted by a student must be their own. If the student uses the words or ideas of someone else, they must cite the source by such means as a footnote. Our guiding principle is that any honest evaluation of a student's performance must be based on that student's work. Any action taken by a student that would result in misrepresentation of someone else's work or actions as the student's own — such as cheating on a test, submitting for credit a paper written by another person, or forging an advisor's signature — is intellectually dishonest and deserving of censure.
Several degree programs offer student learning opportunities (such as internships, field work, and clinical experiences) outside the standard classroom setting. As part of the learning process, students must understand and engage in conduct that adheres to principles guiding employment within the professional workplace. These behaviors include, but are not limited to, academic integrity, accountability, reliability, respect, use of appropriate language and dress, civility, professional ethics, honesty, and trustworthiness. Disciplinary action may be initiated for inappropriate conduct occurring while participating in any course-related project or event.