What do you do in the EED?

Dr. Herman: My primary job is to teach technical communication courses, ENGR 2367, to our engineering students. More broadly, I help the EED evaluate and implement how engineers learn technical communications skills to ensure that they are best prepared for the communications challenges they will face as professional engineers.

What drew you to Engineering Education?

I'm deeply interested in the ways that language participates in how engineering students become technical experts in their fields. The flip side of that is ensuring that, once they become experts, they can effectively translate their technical ideas in ways that clarify their value for people whose background may differ from theirs. To me, the EED is a natural fit because of its commitment to ensuring that engineers are as prepared to communicate their technical ideas as they are to develop them.

How does your teaching influence your research?

My research is centered on communicating scientific and technical principles for a variety of audience levels of expertise, so teaching is rewarding because I get to guide how students developing their expertise are thinking through that knowledge in writing. In the EED I have the chance to observe how communication works in the development of knowledge-production at a variety of levels, which breeds fascinating research questions that can enhance how we approach engineering education more broadly. How does addressing technical communication regularly in the first year influence engineering students’ value of communication as a tool for doing their work in other courses? How do attitudes about writing and communication change over the professional life of an engineer? How do the specific needs and knowledge of the
engineering disciplines influence the writing that is required in those fields? How can we continue preparing engineers for the ever-evolving writing and communication practices in industry? Answering these questions can help improve how we teach engineers, as well as how those engineers develop and communicate new and innovative ideas in the world.

**What's your favorite thing about working in the EED?**

My students are hard working, curious, and brilliant. My colleagues are deeply committed to the students and to helping one another be the best teachers we can be.

**What's a fun fact about yourself?**

I love national parks, and I've visited over 27 of them.