

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communications Studies COMS 363, L04
Professional and Technical Communication

Fall 2015
Sept. 12 – Dec. 05

Saturdays 08:30 - 11:50

Dates: Sept. 12, 19, 26 – Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 – Nov. 7, 21, 28, – Dec. 5.

Instructor: Mohammad Sadeghi Esfahlani (Moe)
Office: SS 250
Office Phone: N/A
E-Mail: esfahlani@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: Sat. 1-2pm, Tue. 5-6pm, Fri. 10-11am and by appointment

Course Description

This course will introduce you to a simple, intelligible approach to writing for your professional life. Theories and practical elements of professional and technical communications will be presented based on textbook material and discussed interactively throughout the course sessions. You will learn the rhetorical dimensions of workplace settings and will learn how to plan, compose and deliver documents appropriate for various audiences in formal settings, encompassing both written and oral communications. Activities in each class will include practical engagement in writing and speaking. Assignments include in-class assignments in the *October* and *November* sessions and out-of-class assignments in *November* and *December* sessions. There will be an opportunity for you to better their grade by taking up a bonus assignment.

Objectives of the Course

The objectives of this course are the following:

- To empower you to communicate effectively through oral presentations and written documents
- To enhance your expertise in the mechanics of writing: spelling, grammar, and punctuation
- To capacitate your abilities to produce various forms of documents including reports, proposals, letters and CVs
- To consolidate your competencies in finding and analyzing reliable sources for the information that you produce for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Textbooks and Readings

The following textbook is the basis for the design of this course and is therefore **required** for this class. You will need to do specific readings for a full understanding of course material. In-class assignments are also taken from this textbook:

Ewald, T. (2014). Writing in the Technical Fields: A Practical Guide. Don Mills: Oxford University Press Canada.

You can buy this book at the University Bookstore. Although the library has a copy on reserve, please invest the money to buy your own copy and invest the time to read it; these investments will hopefully pay off through your improved skills in future professional and academic life!

The following website is a supplementary resource, recommended to be used as a handbook that can help you maintain the skills that you have acquired and navigate our discussed subjects in the future.

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/548/01/>

Communication Policy

You are welcome to bring and use your laptop or tablet for in-class assignments; however, it is not acceptable to use them for any other purpose than immediately related to your coursework.

Cell phones must be **turned off at the beginning of the class and put away throughout the class**; texting is not permitted during class time. Students who are unable to comply with this requirement will be asked to leave the class.

Your instructor will respond to all emails within 24 hours and will be available to answer questions in person during office hours. You are encouraged to discuss your assignments in advance during this time.

Assignments and Evaluation

There will be **five in-class assignments** beginning in the 4th session which will be held on *Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24 and Nov. 28*. Each assignment will be similar to the exercises in the required textbook from related chapters. You will be asked to complete these assignments in groups of 3-5. Each assignment is worth 5% and together, they make up to 25% of your final grade.

There will be **five out-of-class assignments** accounting together for 75% of the final grade. Detailed assignment guidelines and evaluation criteria will be posted on D2L and discussed in the September sessions.

Comparative Critical Memo (5%): a 250-500 word (1-2 pages) short essay about *two of the October sessions (3-24)* of your choice, analyzing and

comparing your experience working in the two different groups. This assignment must be submitted together with your proposal on Oct. 31st.

Proposal (15%): a 750-1500 word (2-4 pages) essay proposing your final report based on Chapter 6. This assignment must be submitted together with your comparative critical memo on Oct. 31st.

Peer-Review (5%): a 300-600 word (1-2 pages) essay providing feedback to a proposal of a peer with whom you have also worked in a group, to be submitted on Nov 7th.

Formal Report (35%): a 4000-5000 word (10-12 pages) full scale report based on Chapter 7, to be submitted on Nov. 21st.

Job Application Package (15%): a job application package based on Chapter 11 to be submitted on the last day of class (Dec. 5th).

Assignment (in-class)	Due Date	Chapters	Worth (% of total grade)
Group assignment 1	Oct. 3	1,2,3	5%
Group assignment 2	Oct. 10	4,5	5%
Group assignment 3	Oct. 17	12,13	5%
Group assignment 4	Oct. 24	6,9	5%
Group assignment 5	Nov. 28	7, 8, 10	5%
Total in-class assignments			25%

Assignment (out-of-class)	Due Date	Chapters	Worth (% of total grade)
Comparative Critical Memo	Oct. 31	6,8	5%
Proposal	Oct. 31	6,7	15%
Peer review	Nov. 7	6,7,8	5%
Formal Report	Nov. 21	7,9	35%
Job Application Package	Dec. 05	1, 11	15%
Total out-of-class assignments			75%

Special Topic Presentations (Bonus): Additionally, there will be a bonus assignment designed to help you improve your grade by up to 10%. The first opportunity in which you can earn up to 10% bonus is on Sep. 26th about “time management”. For this topic and date, you need to consult with me (instructor) and get an approval on Sep 19th.

Another option is to consult with me about an alternative topic for a later date. For this option, you will have the opportunity to earn up to 5% bonus. You may suggest a topic or pick one suggested by me (instructor). However, all bonus assignments must be approved at least two weeks in advance and the latest by Nov. 7th.

For the special topic presentations, you will need to conduct research and prepare a 15-20 min presentation for the class.

Bonus Assignment	Due date	Worth (% of final grade)
Special Topic Presentations	Sep. 26 (<i>time management</i>)	10%
	Upon approval	5%

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Regular attendance and participation in class activities are essential components of this course. Particularly, in-class assignments are designed to reinforce your learning and mastery of the art of professional communication through active engagement and participation; they make up more than 1/3 of your final grade. Regular class attendance is the most efficient way of getting a good mark as well as valuable skills and knowledge from this course.

However, in order to receive a passing grade in the course, all assignments weighted more than 15% must be completed.

Submission of Assignments: Please hand in a printed copy of your essays directly to your tutor or instructor after class sessions if possible. Please **also** hand in an electronic copy via email before the midnight of the due date. Instructions for email submissions will be provided on the first day of the class.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at final exams in SS 320 after classes have ended. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment. For courses in which assignments are submitted electronically, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the correct copy of the assignment is submitted. (Including the version date or version number in your file name may help you avoid submitting the wrong version of your written assignments.)

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late. If you are sick and so cannot submit your assignment on time, please provide a doctor's note if possible. If other circumstances prevent you from submitting your assignment on time, please provide appropriate documentation and email the instructor as soon as possible.

Student Accommodations

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf

Please note:

1. Students seeking accommodations for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors directly. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
2. When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.
3. For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the University Calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html> and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Grading & Grade Scale of the Department of Communication, Media and Film

Final grades are reported as letter grades. However, assignments in this course will be graded using percentage grades. The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department. If letter grades are used for an assignment or other course component, the percentage equivalent in the final column will be used for calculating the final grade:

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Department grade scale equivalents	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations
4.00	Outstanding	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70		A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%

3.30		B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good—clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70		B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30		C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70		C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00		D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	F	00 - 49.99%	0%

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people’s words and ideas begin. Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436> . If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor TFDL, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following

university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program 	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App 	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman 	https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds
SU WELLNESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

This course will follow the structure of the required textbook for the most. Each session will cover material from 2-3 chapters and will also review related subjects from past sessions (see assignments). A detailed schedule of lectures and readings will be provided on D2L before the beginning of this course.