University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communications Studies COMS 363, L06
Professional and Technical Communication

Fall 2015
Classes begin Wednesday, September 9th and end Wednesday, December 2nd.
Classes meet Wednesdays, from 3-5:45pm

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Office Hours:	Wednesday, 11am-1 2 noon or by appointment.

Course Description

This course offers an introduction to the rhetorical dimensions of professional and technical communication. It emphasizes a practical approach to clear and effective written communication for a broad range of professional contexts and purposes.

Objectives

Through the course's lectures, discussions, activities and assignments, students will develop skills and understanding in the following areas:

- rhetorical approaches to crafting professional documents
- conventions for a range of professional genres and contexts
- collaborative research and writing
- document design strategies
- the 6 Cs of effective writing (Concreteness, Courtesy, Clarity, Conciseness, Completeness, and Correctness)

Textbooks and Readings

The following required text is available at the University of Calgary bookstore: *Writing in the Technical Fields* by Thorsten Ewald.

From time to time, students may be required to read additional material posted on D2L

Internet and electronic communication device information

Electronic devices in the classroom: Students may use electronic devices (laptops, notepads etc.) for class-related activities only (i.e. note-taking, group projects, research etc.). Electronic devices for non course-related activities are not allowed. The instructor reserves the right to request electronic communication to be turned off at any time.

Recording lectures: Recording any part of any lecture in any form without permission is not permitted. Photographing lecture slides is not permitted. These restrictions are due to copyright and intellectual property issues and are strictly enforced.

E-mail Policy: Important announcements and course information will sometimes be sent via email. It is the students' responsibility to ensure that their email address in the university system is correct, that they are indeed receiving university-related emails, and that they are reading course-related emails carefully.

Please expect a 24hr hour response time for questions sent via email.

Assignments, Evaluation & Due Dates

Quiz #1 (10%) October 7
Quiz #2 (10%) November 18
The purpose of the quizzes is to assess understanding and retention of core concepts covered in the text and class lectures. The format will be multiple choice and short answer.

In-class participation assignments (10%)
Short assignments are completed and submitted *in class*; these assignments are not graded but will count towards participation. There will be no opportunity to make up these marks. These assignments, often completed in teams, allow students to apply and practice strategies covered in lecture.

Email Memo (10%)
Due: September 30
This assignment requires students to compose a workplace memo consistent with the features of routine correspondence discussed in the course. Students apply their knowledge of effective sentences, paragraphs, organization and memo conventions in this assignment.

Group Proposal & Contract (5%)
Due: October 7
Each group must develop a one page proposal that introduces their research topic. Groups must also submit a group contract where members agree on terms and expectations. This assignment is meant to encourage progress towards the group's final paper and presentation.

Annotated Bibliography (5%)
Due: October 21
Students must *individually* prepare an annotated bibliography of five articles relevant to their group's final project. This assignment is designed to help students develop research skills and contribute to their final project.

Job Application Package (15%)
Due: November 4
Students will prepare a coordinating cover letter + resume for an open position that they would be qualified for. The ability to create persuasive and scannable workplace documents is evaluated in this assignment.

Group Presentation (10%)
Due: November 25 & December 2
Each group must prepare a 10-12 min presentation based on the findings of their recommendation report. The ability to persuasively convey complex information to a general audience is evaluated in this assignment.

Final Group Project: Recommendation Report (25%)
Due: December 2
In this assignment, students apply their comprehensive knowledge of effective professional communication and the conventions of technical reports discussed throughout the course.

Working in small groups, students will prepare a recommendation report that (1) identifies a website, product, program, or issue relevant to a professional/technical field that would benefit from improvement, (2) evaluates and researches the subject and (3) provides recommendations based on their research. Specifically, this 15-20pg report requires primary and secondary research, a survey, original data, visual aids (tables, graphs, diagrams etc.) and references. Primary research must only be conducted among students in the course (COMS 363:L06, Fall 2015) in order to comply with the Faculty of Arts ethics in research (see research ethics section below).

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

You do not need to complete all assignments and exams in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

Submission of Assignments
Please hand in your essays directly to your instructor. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS320; a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available for after-hours submission. Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox.

Do not submit assignments via D2L drop box unless specified by the instructor.

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 may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Students with Disabilities
If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Student Accessibility Services (220-8237, http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than 14 days after the start of the course.

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 System & Department of Communication, Media and Film

Grade Scale: Work in this course will be graded using percentage grades. The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film:

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

In this class, primary research must only be conducted among students in the course (COMS 363:L05, Summer 2015) in order to comply with the Faculty of Arts ethics in research requirements. Consult with the instructor if you have any questions.

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 • **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/safewalk
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support • **IT help line**	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE • **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 • **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 • **Counselling Services** • **Health Services**	**403-210-9355** (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health

• **Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE**	**403-266-HELP (4357)**
• **Online resources and tips**	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

Please see D2L for up-to-date schedule on lecture topics and readings.