

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communications Studies (COMS) 363 – Lecture 04

Professional and Technical Communication

Summer 2015

Thurs. July 2 – Thurs, Aug. 13

Lecture: Tues., and Thus., 15:00 – 17:45

Instructor: Dr. Shawn Mueller
Office: SS307 (Shared office space)
Office Phone: TBA
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Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: Immediately after lecture, or by appointment

Course Description

This course is an introduction to effective communication in the most common genres of professional and technical writing and speech. You will learn the processes involved in planning, composing, and delivering of technical communication for a variety of audiences and rhetorical contexts. Guided practice and peer review will assist you in developing expertise in visual, electronic, print, and face-to-face communication.

Objectives of the Course

This course is designed to assist in the development of strong written and oral communication skills, so people both inside and outside your area of expertise can easily understand the professional and technical information you are conveying. To this end, we will study the principles and techniques of professional and technical writing, focusing on both written and oral communication skills. We will work to build strong writing, editing, and speaking skills, while learning to generate effective professional and technical documents. Attention will also be paid to critical and rhetorical analyses of professional and technical documents. More specifically, students who successfully complete this course should be able to:

- Learn to communicate effectively through written and oral communication;
- Demonstrate expertise in the foundational skills of written discourse: spelling grammar and punctuation;
- Prepare various forms of documents, including reports, proposals and professional letters;
- Become competent in finding and analyzing sources to be used in the preparation of research and other professional documents for presentation to a variety of audiences.

Textbooks and Readings

Effective Communication for the Technical Professions, (2nd Ed) Jennifer MacLennan, Oxford, 2008. This text is available (free) as an e-book through the University of Calgary Library. Hard copy is, of course, available for purchase in the Bookstore.

Other selected readings will be assigned via Desire to Learn (D2L).

Internet and electronic communication device information

No restriction on the use of laptops (ipads, netbooks, etc.) in class if they are used to take notes or find information relevant to the class, and if there is no disturbance of other students or the instructor. Phones must be turned off during class time unless you are a health care or law enforcement professional with appropriate ID.

Assignments and Evaluation

The main deliverables for this course will be a technical writing report and an oral presentation on its contents. The project should involve the application of multiple technical communication skills, including the incorporation of graphic elements (charts, graphs, tables, maps and other illustrations). This project will be outlined extensively during the first meeting on July 2, 2015.

Item	Weight	Details
In-class assignments (written and oral)	20% (total)	In-class exercises designed to build understanding of concepts and skills discussed in assigned readings. May be individual or collaborative in nature. Please note that in-class assignments cannot be 'made up' at a later date.
Topic Submission	5%	Statement of topic to be developed into research project. Due Date: July 9
Research Proposal	20%	4-5 page proposal outlining the work to be done, work plan timeline, and preliminary list of resources. Due Date: July 21
Final Report	30%	10-15 page formal report; may incorporate tables, charts, graphs and illustrations where appropriate. Proper referencing must be utilized. Due Date: August 4
Research Presentation	25%	10-15 minute oral summary of the report's contents. Presentation software may be used but is not necessary. Presentation Dates: August 11/13

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: All assignments will be submitted electronically via D2L. Assignment submission procedures will be discussed in depth during the introductory lecture on July 2.

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. Please contact the instructor if you are having difficulty completing any assignment.

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.ualgary.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.ualgary.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.ualgary.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%

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Department grade scale equivalents	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations
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/safewalk
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 is designed to be a flexible schedule. When and how certain topics are covered in class may change. Students are strongly advised to keep up with the reading schedule to ensure full benefit of class discussion.

Week	Topic/Reading	Assignments
Week 1 (July 2)	Introduction to course Outline and syllabus; <u>Reading:</u> MacLennan - Ch 1 & 4 - emphasis on Ch. 1	
Week 2 (July 7, 9)	Ethics <u>Reading:</u> MacLennan - Ch 2, 3 & 5	Assignment 1 Due July 9
Week 3 (July 14, 16)	Reports, Technical Description and Quality of Thinking <u>Reading:</u> MacLennan - Ch 6 & 7	
Week 4 (July 21, 23)	Analytical Design <u>Reading:</u> MacLennan - Ch 8	Assignment 2 Due July 21
Week 5 (July 28, 30)	Practical Application <u>Reading:</u> MacLennan - Ch 9	
Week 6 (Aug. 4, 6)	Careers & Employment <u>Reading:</u> MacLennan - Ch 10	Assignment 3 Due August 4
Week 7 (Aug 11, 13)	Presentations Closing Remarks	Assignment 4 (Presentation) on assigned date