

**University of Calgary**  
**Department of Communication and Culture**

**Communications Studies (COMS) 363 - Lecture 03**  
**Professional and Technical Communication**

**Fall 2014**

**Monday, September 8 – Monday, December 1**  
**(excluding October 13 and November 11)**

**Mondays, 12:00-14:45**

**Instructor:** Christine M. Shellska  
**Office:** SS 307  
**Office Phone:** 403-256-1574 (please leave a message)  
**E-Mail:** cmshells@ucalgary.ca  
**Web Page:** D2L available through MyUofC portal  
**Office Hours:** Flexible, by appointment

**Course Description**

An introduction to professional and technical communication in diverse media. Students will learn the rhetorical dimensions of workplace settings as well as the process of planning, composing, and delivering professional and technical communication for various audiences.

**Objectives of the Course**

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Explain what technical writing is, and the importance of good communication skills in the workplace
- Produce clear, concise writing your intended audience can understand
- Produce writing that adheres to professional ethical standards
- Design visually effective documents and technical illustrations
- Compose common types of e-mail and print correspondence
- Develop a technical report
- Prepare proposals and progress reports
- Write instructions, procedures and policies
- Deliver a presentation
- Write an effective résumé

**Textbooks and Readings**

Tebeaux, E. & Dragga, S. (2010). *The Essentials of Technical Communication*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Supplemental student resources located at [www.oup.com/us/tebeaux](http://www.oup.com/us/tebeaux).

Additional materials to be posted to D2L.

### Internet and electronic communication device information

Please refrain from using cell phones and other hand-held communication devices and ensure they are set to silent or turned off during classes and labs. Please refrain from using social media during classes and labs unless instructed to do so. The use of electronic devices such as laptops and tablets to take notes or to advance your understanding of the course material is acceptable.

### Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment	Weight	Due
Assignment 1 (Bio)	5%	September 15
Assignment 2 (Complaint letter)	10%	October 6
Assignment 3 (Pricing proposal)	20%	October 27
Assignment 4 (Group project; 10% presentation, 20% content)	30%	November 24
Final Exam	20%	TBA
Presentation Evaluations	5%	Ongoing
Class participation	10%	Ongoing

Detailed instructions will be provided in lectures and labs, and posted online. It is your responsibility to ensure you understand the instructions. If at any time you are unclear about the instructions, please feel welcome to approach me.

Assignments 1 and 2 are to be completed during lab time and submitted at the end of class.

**Assignment 1:** Congratulations! You've just received a promotion within your organization. The publishers of your company's newsletter have asked you to submit a photo and a brief biography (250-300 words).

**Assignment 2:** Oh dear. You've been dealing with an organization, and their product or service is downright shoddy. Write a complaint letter describing the problem, how it affected you and/or your organization, and the follow-up action you expect the organization to take (500-750 words).

**Assignment 3:** Your client has asked you to prepare a pricing proposal for a product or service. Develop a 750-1000 word proposal on a product or service of your choice that includes a minimum of one table, one chart or graph (drawing on numerical data), and one other visual element. We will begin working on this project in class the week prior to the deadline. Please e-mail your proposed product or service to me during the lab at the latest. If the product or service is appropriate and viable for this assignment, I will approve it via e-mail.

**Assignment 4** (groups of 4 or 5): You will develop a 2250-2500 word technical report including a letter of transmittal, executive summary, and recommendations. We will be forming groups on September 15, and on September 22, you and the members of your

group will e-mail your topic to me. If the topic is appropriate and viable for this assignment, I will approve it via e-mail. All group members will receive the same grade. Your presentation should be approximately 20 minutes long. Your presentation comprises 10% of the grade, and the content of your report comprises the remaining 20%.

**Presentation evaluations** are worth 5%. You are required to submit a small amount of feedback (minimum of two sentences; point form is acceptable) during **four of the five presentation sessions to achieve this grade** (depending on the number of groups, the schedule may be subject to revision). If you submit feedback for fewer than four of the presentation sessions, you will **not** receive credit for any of the evaluations. Feedback is for my use only and will not be shared with presenters.

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination:** Yes

Note: If your class is held in the evening, the Registrar's Office will attempt to schedule the final exam during the evening; however, there is NO guarantee that the exam will NOT be scheduled during the day.

All assignments and exams must be completed or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

**Submission of Assignments:** All assignments are to be submitted digitally to the instructor in Word format (with the exception of presentations). Out-of-class assignments are due at midnight on the due date.

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 & Dept of Communication and Culture Grade Scale

Work in this course will be graded using percentage grades. The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in Communication and Culture:

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 <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/node/208> . If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3<sup>rd</sup> 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/research/research-ethics>

### Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
<b>ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (PIC)</b>	SS 102 403-220-3580 <a href="mailto:picarts@ucalgary.ca">picarts@ucalgary.ca</a>
<b>CAMPUS SECURITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calgary Police Service</li> <li>• Emergency Text Messaging</li> <li>• Emergency Evacuation &amp; Assembly</li> <li>• Safewalk Program</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a> <b>403-220-5333</b> <b>403-266-1234</b> <b>Emergency: call 911</b> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage</a> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints</a> If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a>
<b>DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT help line</li> </ul>	<a href="http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students">http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students</a> 403-220-5555 or <a href="mailto:itsupport@ucalgary.ca">itsupport@ucalgary.ca</a>
<b>STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing Support Services</li> <li>• Student Services Mobile App</li> </ul>	<a href="http://ucalgary.ca/ssc">http://ucalgary.ca/ssc</a> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support">http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support</a> <a href="http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents">http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents</a>

<p><b>STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty of Arts Reps</li> <li>• Student Ombudsman</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html">http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds">http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds</a></p>
<p><b>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counselling Services</li> <li>• Health Services</li> <li>• Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE</li> <li>• Online resources and tips</li> </ul>	<p><b>403-210-9355</b> (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm</p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</a></p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</a></p> <p>403-266-HELP (4357)</p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</a></p> <p>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.</p>

### Schedule of Lectures and Readings

All readings are found in the assigned textbook and its accompanying online resources. It is also expected that students will review the online supplemental materials associated with each chapter, located at [www.oup.com/us/tebeaux](http://www.oup.com/us/tebeaux). Additional materials to be posted to D2L.

Mondays, 2014	Reading	Lecture	Notes
September 8		Introduction to the course	
September 15	Chapter 1	Writing in the workplace	Form groups <b>Assignment 1 due</b>
September 22	Chapter 2	Understanding your audience	Submit proposed topic for group project
September 29	Chapter 3	Ethical writing	
October 6	Chapter 4	Style	<b>Assignment 2 due</b>
October 13	THANKSGIVING – NO CLASSES		
October 20	Chapter 5/6	Document design/Illustrations	
October 27	Chapter 7/8	Correspondence/Reports	<b>Assignment 3 due</b> Group presentations
November 3	Chapter 9	Proposals and progress reports	Group presentations
November 10	READING WEEK – NO CLASSES		
November 17	Chapter 10	Instructions, procedures, policies	Group presentations
November 24	Chapter 11	Delivering a presentation	<b>Assignment 4 due</b> Group presentations
December 1	Chapter 12	Finding work	Group presentations