

University of Calgary
Department of Communication and Culture
Communications Studies COMS 363, L04
Professional and Technical Communication
Fall 2014
Begins Sat. Sept. 13 - Sat. Nov. 29th (excluding Nov. 8th)
Lecture time: Saturdays, 8:30am-12 noon

Instructor: Andrea Jonahs
Office: SS240
E-Mail: avjonahs@gmail.com (please allow 24hr response time)
UnderWeb Page: D2L through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: Saturdays, Noon - 1pm 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 concise, clear and effective written communication for a broad range of professional contexts and purposes.

Objectives of the Course

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

- rhetorical approaches to crafting documents
- an understanding of the conventions for a range of written genres and contexts
- skills involved in group and collaborative research and writing
- document design strategies that ensure professional and effective communication
- writing skills that promote clear, concise, relevant and persuasive communication

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 as they are distracting to the instructor as well as other students. 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 often be sent via D2L. It is your responsibility to make sure D2L has your current email address and, of course, that you are reading these emails carefully.

Assignments and Evaluation (Total = 100%)

Quiz #1 (10%) October 11 **20%**

Quiz #2 (10%) November 22

The purpose of the quizzes is to assess understanding and retention of core concepts covered in the text and class lecture. 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.

Job Application Package **10%**

DUE October 4

Students will begin this assignment by searching online for a job they would be likely to apply for. Students will then prepare a resume and cover letter based on their own work experiences and backgrounds. Resume and cover letter must coordinate. Documents should demonstrate persuasive language and appropriate conventions as covered in the course material.

Professional Correspondence: Memo/Letter **10%**

DUE October 25

This assignment requires students to compose a letter or memo consistent with the features of professional correspondence discussed in the course.

Annotated Bibliography **10%**

DUE November 1

Students must prepare an annotated bibliography of articles relevant to their group's final project. This assignment is designed to help students develop research, documenting, and collaborative skills.

Final Group Project **30%**

DUE November 29

Working in groups of four, students will prepare a research-based technical report (15-20 pgs) that comprehensively applies the principles and techniques for effective professional communication covered in the course.

This project requires: primary and secondary sources, original data, a survey, visual aids (tables, graphs, images, diagrams etc.) and a bibliography (see annotated bibliography). Primary research must only be conducted among students in the course (COMS 363:L04) in order to comply with the Faculty of Arts ethics in research. Students must not only thoroughly evaluate and research a particular issue but also provide research based recommendations.

Group Presentation **10%**

Due November 29

Each group must prepare a 10-12 min presentation on their final project.

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

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: NO

Schedule of Lectures and Readings: See D2L for current information.

Submission of Assignments

Please hand in assignments directly to your instructor if possible. D2L submission option will be specified by the instructor if applicable. If you are unable to submit assignments directly to your instructor, 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

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: Late assignments will be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late. Sickness and other personal circumstances must be accompanied by documentation in order to be considered for an exemption to the late policy.

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 fourteen (14) days after the start of the course.

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, although 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. 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>

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 (3rd Floor TFDL, <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%

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>.

Students in this course have received course-based ethics approval from the Faculty Research Ethics Committee for usability studies in COMS 363 in which students may conduct anonymous online usability surveys to get their classmates' opinions on the usability of a website.

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (PIC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 picarts@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 	http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html 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.