

University of Calgary
Department of Communication and Culture

Communications Studies COMS 363 L08
Professional and Technical Communication
Fall 2014

September 11 - December 4
Thursdays 12:30-15:15

Instructor: Lisa Bryce
Office Location: SS 216
Phone: tba
E-Mail: bryce@ucalgary.ca
Office Hours: Tuesdays 13:00-15:00 and by appointment.

Course Description

This course will introduce you to the practical elements of professional and technical communication. You will learn how to produce documents appropriate for both workplace and academic settings that encompass both written and oral forms of professional and technical communication. Each class's activities will include practice in writing and speaking. The out-of-class assignments will contribute to your understanding of the course principles.

Course Objectives

The objectives of this course are the following:

- Learning to communicate effectively through oral presentations and written documents
- Developing expertise in the mechanics of writing: spelling, grammar, and punctuation
- Preparing various forms of documents including reports, proposals, and cover letters
- Becoming competent in finding and analyzing reliable sources to be used for producing information for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Textbooks and Readings

The following textbook is required for this class. You will need to do specific readings for a full understanding of course material.

Ewald, T. (2014). *Writing in the Technical Fields*. Don Mills: Broadview Press.

The library has a copy of this textbook on reserve.

Internet and Electronic Communication Device Information

You are welcome to bring and use your laptop for in-class assignments; however, the use of laptops for any purpose unrelated to this class is not acceptable.

Cell phones must be put away during class: texting is **not** permitted during class time. Students who are unable to comply with this requirement will lose their class participation grade and possibly be asked to leave.

Assignments and Evaluation

Table 1, following, gives the assignments, due dates, and percentages worth.

Table 1: Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment	Due Date	Percentage Worth
In-class assignment 1	September 25	5%
In-class assignment 2	October 2 and 9	5%
In-class assignment 3	October 23	5%
In-class assignment 4	October 30 and November 6	10%
Topic approval	Email to instructor by 16:30 Friday, September 26.	5%
Proposal	October 9	15%
Report	December 4	25%
Transmittal letter	November 20	5%
Oral presentation	November 13, 20, 27, December 4	20%
Class participation (in-class assignments)	On-going	5%

Assignment Descriptions

In-class Assignments

The four in-class assignments are produced collaboratively. You will work in groups of no more than three persons and prepare a written piece on the technical topic of the day as well as a 5-10 minute presentation for the class. You will be given time in class to prepare.

In-class exercise 1: writing assignment: understanding audience

In-class exercise 2: informative presentation: creating an effective document design

In-class exercise 3: demonstrative presentation: writing and presenting a set of instructions

In-class exercise 4: informative presentation: creating effective presentations

Please note, because of their nature, the in-class assignments cannot be “made up” at a later date.

Topic Approval

You will need to choose an appropriate business or technical topic for your analytical or report and presentation. It is essential that you discuss this topic with me before beginning the proposal and report assignments to ensure that you are not taking on anything that will require more time than one term to complete and that the topic is one that invites analysis. For help in choosing a topic, please see the Proposal assignment specifications on D2L. You are welcome to brainstorm with me if you would like.

The authorization is a $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a page describing the topic you wish to work on, how you will make it relevant for this course and this audience (our class), and three scholarly sources you can use for your research project. This assignment is given a grade out of 5; to receive an A, email your request for approval (bryce@ucalgary.ca) by the due date (16:30 on Friday, September 26) and provide sufficient information. If some part of your topic needs clarification or if the authorization is not well written, you may receive less than an A.

Proposal

Using the topic you have received approval to do, write a proposal of 5 pages that shows your ability to follow the genre's conventions.

The Analytical Report

Using the same topic that you have received approval for (topic approval) and written your proposal on, you will write a 5-page report. This page count does not include the transmittal letter, cover page, or references. This paper will allow you to show your ability to write in the appropriate genre.

Presentation

During the final weeks of term, you will present your report to the class in an 8- to 10-minute presentation. You are evaluated on the professionalism with which you present in addition to the content of the presentation.

Class participation

Regular attendance and participation in class activities are essential components of this course. The course assignments are designed to reinforce your learning and mastery of the material through active engagement and doing. We will be doing activities each class. Being present physically in the class is not enough: you need to be involved intellectually: contributing to each other's learning and participating in the creation of a positive atmosphere and learning environment.

To receive a passing grade in this course, the proposal and report must be submitted, and the final presentation must be performed in class on the day assigned. It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment.

Note: Please hand in your assignments 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.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Submission of Assignments

Please hand in your assignments directly to your instructor if possible. 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.

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 other circumstances prevent you from submitting your assignment on time, please provide appropriate documentation and email me as soon as possible.

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, and so on) 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 and Department 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 (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/research/research-ethics>

This course has not received course-based ethics approval; consequently, if you wish to use surveys as part of your research, then you may conduct anonymous online surveys of your classmates only. Unless you apply for research ethics clearance on your own, no other use of surveys, interviews, or research with people is permitted.

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	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333
• Calgary Police Service	403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program 	<p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage</p> <p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints</p> <p>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/</p>
<p>DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	<p>http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students</p> <p>403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca</p>
<p>STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App 	<p>http://ucalgary.ca/ssc</p> <p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents</p>
<p>STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman 	<p>http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html</p> <p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds</p>
<p>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	<p>403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</p> <p>403-266-HELP (4357)</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</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

Each assignment requires specific readings from the textbook; this information will be included with each assignment.