

Communications Studies (COMS) 363 – Lecture 24
Professional and Technical Communication

Spring 2011

Mondays & Wednesdays, 11:00 – 1:45
Rooms SS010 and SS018

Instructor: Julie Vouri
Office Location: SS209 (Shared office)
Office Phone: (Shared phone with no voice mail. Contact via email instead.)
E-mail: jvouri@ucalgary.ca. Usually 4-hour response time during business hours (8 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday through Friday).
Office Hours: By appointment – Arrange in class or via email.

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to professional and technical communication, including both writing and oral presentation. Students will learn the rhetorical dimensions of communication in workplace settings as well as the processes involved in planning, composing and delivering professional technical documents and presentations for a variety of audiences. Guided practice and peer review will help students develop expertise in visual, electronic, print and face-to-face communication.

Objectives of the Course

This course aims to equip students with fundamental knowledge and skills to write and speak more effectively and ethically in a variety of professional contexts. Students will learn:

- Rhetorical principles regarding how to construct and adapt information for different audiences, purposes and genres.
- Basic knowledge of some current social, organizational and technological contexts in which professional and technical communication are used.
- Critical thinking, critical reading and textual-rhetorical analysis skills.
- Individual and collaborative research, drafting, document review, revision and presentation skills.;
- Professional and technical conventions regarding professionalism, common genres, document design, organization, style, grammar and diction.

Internet and Electronic Communication Device Information

Please no texting or chatting on your cell phone during class. Laptops may be used during class. Refrain from using the Internet to view sites unrelated to class topics.

Textbooks and Readings

This course has two required sources of information:

- Alred, G. J., Brusaw, C. T., & Oliu, W. E. (2006). *Handbook of Technical Writing* (9th ed.). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's. Available at the bookstore.
- Additional information as posted in Blackboard or handed out in class.

Assignments and Evaluation

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each assignment submitted. All assignments are to be completed individually, except where noted.

NOTE: Submit your assignments at the start of class (unless otherwise directed). 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 outside SS320 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.

- Writing quiz #1 – 6% <May 11>
- Business letter (team) – 8% <May 16>
- Project proposal (team) – 6% <May 25>
- Writing quiz #2 – 6% <May 30>
- Editing – 12% <June 6>
- Interpersonal communication quiz – 13% <June 13 via email before start of class>
- Readings & lecture quiz – 12% <June 15>
- Draft of report for peer review (team) – 4% <June 15>
- Research & recommendation report (team) – 15% <June 20 via email before start of class>
- Presentation of research area (team) – 8% <June 22>
- Participation (in-class individual & team exercises) – 10% <Various>

NOTES:

- Satisfactory completion of individual work is a requirement to pass the course.
- Satisfactory participation on the team project work is a requirement to pass the course.
- In-class exercises cannot be made up or submitted in advance.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No.

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 **calendar day** late, and assignments more than five calendar days late may be given a grade of “F” and no feedback can be expected. An assignment is considered one calendar day late if it is submitted one minute after the deadline specified in the assignment guide.

To appeal for extensions, students must promptly submit an acceptable form of documentation for the illness (or other extenuating circumstance) to the instructor.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). As one consequence, **students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their name on the front page and their ID number. Also you will be required to provide a piece of picture identification in order to pick up an assignment or look at a final exam from SS320 after classes have ended.**

For more information see also <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>.

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. 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 Writing Support Services. Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/writingsupport/>.

Grading System

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture (Revised, effective September 2008):

Work in this course will be assigned a letter grade, which represents the following percentage range equivalents:

Grading Scale	
A+	96-100
A	90-95.99
A -	85-89.99
B+	80-84.99
B	75-79.99
B-	70-74.99
C+	65-69.99
C	60-64.99
C-	55-59.99
D+	53-54.99
D	50-52.99
F	0-49

Where a grade on a particular assignment is expressed as a letter grade, it will normally be converted to a number using the midpoint of the scale. For example, 'A-' would be converted to 87.5 for calculation purposes. 'F' will normally be converted to zero.

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. Readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. This includes assignments submitted in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media, and material taken from such sources.

Please consult your instructor or Writing Support Services (MacEwan Student Centre 4th floor, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/writingsupport/>) if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and the consequences thereof please see the current University of Calgary Calendar at the following link: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>.

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre (220-8237) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of the course.

Students' Union

For details about the current Students' Union contacts for the Faculty of Arts see <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html>

Student Ombudsman

For details on the Student Ombudsman's Office see <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/services/student-services/student-rights.html>

Emergency Evacuation and Assembly points

For information on the emergency evacuation procedures and the assembly points see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

"SAFEWALK" Program -- 220-5333

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night -- call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot booths.

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

The Department of Communication and Culture Research Ethics site:

<http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/ethics>

or the University of Calgary Research Ethics site:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/cfieb>

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

See Blackboard for the schedule of lectures and readings.