

Communications Studies (COMS) 363 – L27
Professional & Technical Communication
Spring 2011
TuTh 14:00 – 16:45, ES 012
Statutory Holiday (no classes): Victoria Day, May 23
Reading Day (no classes): June 2

Instructor: Mr. Paul Kennett
Office Location: SS 209
E-Mail: pkennett@ucalgary.ca
Office Hours: By Appointment

Additional Information

I can be contacted via email at any time. Please allow up to 24 hours for a response. Further, I will not answer any emails sent after 4:30 the day prior to a weekend until the next regular school day. It is inadvisable to leave assignment questions to the last minute.

Students can schedule office appointments via email.

Questions with respect to assignments are welcome anytime, and I will gladly look at drafts for students. Note, however, that I will not correct drafts; rather, I will identify the most problematic elements of the document and help provide the student(s) with tools to effect their own corrections. It is helpful if you come to such a meeting with a question about your draft already prepared.

Students are responsible for lecture attendance and course readings. If lectures or readings are missed students must make their own arrangements to catch up.

Course Description

This course is an introduction to professional and technical communication, both written and oral. Students will learn the practical dimensions of communication in workplace and academic settings, as well as the processes involved in planning, composing and delivering professional and technical communication 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 & technical communication is used.
- Critical thinking, critical reading and textual-rhetorical analysis skills.
- Individual and collaborative research, drafting, document review, and revision skills.
- Professional and technical conventions regarding professionalism, common genres, document design, organization, style, grammar, and diction.
- Essential conventions in document layout and design, typography and the use of graphics.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Cell phones must be turned off at the beginning of class.

Laptop computers may be used to take notes during class. However, inappropriate use of laptops (i.e. to view non-class related content) will not be tolerated and may result in confiscation of the laptop until the end of class time.

Textbooks and Readings:

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

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignments:	Due Date:	Grade Weight:
Text Re-Write (Audience Analysis)	Thursday, May 19	15%
Proposal for Final Presentation & Report	Thursday, May 26	15%
Instructions	Thursday, June 7	15%
Letter of Complaint	Thursday, June 9	15%
Final Project: Presentation	June 16, 21, 23	20%
Final Project: Report	Thursday, June 23	20%
Total:		100%

Students must submit a copy of each written assignment, and deliver each oral assignment. Failure to submit any written assignment(s) and/or to perform any oral assignment(s) will result in a failing grade (F) in the course.

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment.

Note: Please hand in your essays directly to your tutor or 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.

Complete Assignment descriptions are available 24/7 on the course Blackboard. A copy of general grading criteria are also available on Blackboard; grading criteria pertinent to each assignment will be discussed in class prior to each assignment's due date.

Note: attendance of lectures and tutorials is essential for assignment preparation, as explicit and detailed instructions/guidance for each assignment will be given and discussed in the classroom. If you miss classes and do not contact a classmate to catch up you may lose credit on your assignments.

Deadlines:

All assignments are due in class on the due date.

Assignment Criteria Questions & Confusion:

Questions with respect to assignments or any other aspect of the course are warmly welcomed and may be asked in class, using blackboard, over email, or at an office meeting. Please ensure that all questions and confusions are resolved prior to the assignment due date.

Grade Concerns and/or Disputes:

All questions, concerns or disputes over graded assignments must be brought to my attention by way of an office appointment. All such discussions are welcomed, and further they can constitute an important aspect of learning course material.

Note: Students must wait for 24 hours after a graded assignment is handed back before contacting me with a concern or dispute. This interval is an important "cool down" time in the event of strong feelings over an evaluation.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Policy for Late Assignments

If an assignment will be late students must contact me by email before the due date to explain their circumstances. Any late assignments unaccompanied by an email communiqué will be penalized by 5% per day. Assignments more than five days late may be given a grade of 0 and no feedback can be expected.

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

For late assignments use the daytime drop box available in SS320 or the night drop box near the doors of SS320 (see “Assignments and Evaluation” above).

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. For details see <http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. **All** students will be evaluated according to the same standards with respect to writing skills.

Research papers *must* be properly documented. In this course all references must be formatted according to the style of the American Psychological Association (APA Style). Your course Blackboard includes a link to an online APA style guide; your textbook also includes an abbreviated APA style guide (Tebeaux & Dragga, 2010, p.320).

If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: www.efwr.ucalgary.ca

Grading System

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture:

(Revised, effective September 2008)

	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. That is, A- would be converted to 87.5 for calculation purposes. F will 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 the Writing Centre (MacEwan Student Centre 4th floor, efwr.ucalgary.ca) 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/cfreb>

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

A complete schedule of readings will be posted on Blackboard on the first day of class. The schedule will be prepared for the first day of class and posted on Blackboard.