

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

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

Spring 2015

Thursday, May 14 – Thursday June 25

Tuesday\Thursday 9:00-11:45

Instructor: Dr. Naor Cohen
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Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal (delete or edit as needed)
Office Hours: Thursday 12:00-13:00

Course Description

This class takes a rhetorical approach to understanding professional and technical communication. Emphasis is placed on how workplace communication is situated within distinct organizational or corporate cultures as well as broader socio-cultural contexts. Students will gain knowledge and skills in writing across genres and disciplines through inquiry-based learning strategies and collaborative research projects. This theory-driven class will teach students open-ended skills that can be applied to a variety of workplace situations.

Objectives of the Course

Students will learn about the process of planning, composing, and delivering professional and technical communication for various audiences. This course is design to help you develop

- A rhetorical approach to crafting documents--one in which you critically consider your purpose in writing, the needs of your audience(s), and relevant features of the context in which you are writing.
- Writing strategies to keep your writing focused, coherent, and readable;
- Familiarity with the conventions and composing strategies for a range of written genres, including business correspondence, proposals, and reports.
- Familiarity with a range of resources for professional writers, including tools for online research, for online composing, and for collaborative writing;
- document design strategies to ensure that your documents look professional, promote easy retrieval of information, and use visuals to communicate information effectively;
- Competence in the use of a standard style of documentation.
- Competence in preparing PowerPoint presentations.

Textbooks and Readings

MacLennan, J. (2009). *Effective Communication for the Technical Professions*.

- Book is also available online via the university library web-site.
- Additional readings and resource materials will be posted on the course D2L site.

Internet and electronic communication device information

I make no demands upon you in this regard.

Assignments and Evaluation

Due date	Assignment	% of total grade
May 16, 2015	Writing sample	10%
June 2, 2015	Proposal & Annotated bibliography	15%
June 4, 2015	Quiz	15%
June 11, 2015	Survey design	10%
June 18, 2015	PowerPoint presentation	15%
June 25, 2015	Final report	25%
Ongoing participation		10%

Description of assignments

Writing sample is a short writing assignment (no more than 750 words each). It is designed to help you deliver different messages in a concise and coherent way. The style and genre of your writing sample may include a critical assessment of a product, technical topic or web content as well as job application or other professional correspondences.

All assignments, other than your writing sample, will be done in class and lab.

The Quiz is a brief multiple-choice assignment completed in class. It is designed to make you think about and apply the readings.

The **proposal, annotated bibliography, Survey design, PowerPoint and final report** are linked assignments. All of these five assignments will be completed in small groups:

- **Final report:** The final report is a full featured, substantive report (between 3,000-4,000 words) on a web site or product usability study. It will require you to conduct both secondary and primary research and integrate the results into a report.
- The **proposal** will summarize your plans for the report so that your instructor can supply critique and advice (3 pages).
- The **annotated bibliography** will help you to understand the key points of your sources and references which will then become your background information and literature review for the final report. Each group member will prepare an annotated bibliography of 3 resources (150-250 words for each source). This will become useful when writing your final report.

- The **PowerPoint presentation** is the summary and presentation of the final report. Presentations are due before the final draft of the report so that your instructor can supply further advice. Presentations will be about 25 minutes long and include no more than 10 slides. Each group member will be presenting a part of the presentation.
- **Survey design** will help you to design and conduct your own successful online survey for the purpose your final project. The survey will be no longer than 30 questions. Questions can be multiple-choice, open-ended questions or mix of both, depending on your specific final project.

Participation: The course is designed to reinforce student learning and mastery of the material through active engagement and “doing”, and students can expect activities each class. Students are expected to attend classes and participate; “participation” is not only attendance per se but contributing to each others’ learning and participating in the creation of a positive atmosphere and learning environment.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

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

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

Submission of Assignments: 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.

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 & Department of Communication, Media and Film

Grade Scale Work in this course will be graded using percentage grades. The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film:

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 <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436>. 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/resources/ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@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/safewalk
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 	https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ 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.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

A daily schedule of lectures and readings, as well as detailed assignment descriptions, will be handed out on the first day of class.