University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communications Studies COMS 363 L04
Professional and Technical Writing

Spring 2015

Start & end dates (& dates excluded)
May 14 – June 26, excluding May 18th

Lectures, days, and time; Tutorials, days, and time
T/R 12-14:45

Instructor:	Chaseten Remillard
Office:	SS307
Office Phone:	N/A
E-Mail:	csremill@ucalgary.ca
Office Hours:	T/R 3-4pm

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
Heather Graves & Roger Graves. *Strategic Guide to Technical Communication:*
Canadian Edition ISBN: 9781554810239   Edition: 2

Internet and electronic communication device information
No restrictions on use of laptops in class if they are used to take notes and there is no disturbance of other students by visiting inappropriate web sites. Please ensure that your phones are switched off during lectures, unless it is required for extenuating circumstances, such as medical emergencies. If this is the case, you should let your instructor know.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment	weight	Due Date
Writing sample 1 – Cover letter	15%	May 26
Writing sample 2 – Email	15%	June 2
Writing sample 3 – PowerPoint	15%	June 9
Writing sample 4 - Instructions	15%	June 16
Presentation	10%	June 23
Final report	20%	June 25
Participation In-class & Online	10%	throughout

Writing samples are short writing assignments (500 words each). They are designed to help you deliver different messages in a concise and coherent way. The styles and genres of your writing samples may include a critical assessment of a product, technical topic or web content as well as job application and other professional correspondences.

The **Presentation and Final Report** are linked assignments. These assignments will be completed in small groups:

- **Final report**: The final report is a full featured, substantive report (1500-2000 words). It will require you to conduct both secondary and primary research and integrate the results into a report.
- The **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 5-10 minutes long and include no more than 10 slides. Each group member will be presenting a part of the presentation.

Participation: The course is designed to reinforce student learning and mastery of the material through active engagement and "doing", and students can expect activities in class and online. 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. As well, throughout the course online participation will be expected.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

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

Submission of Assignments: All submissions will be through D2L.

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

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 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

Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

Work in this course will be graded using letter 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%

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 • **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 • **IT help line**	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE • **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 • **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 • **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

May 14 – **Introduction to Course**

May 19 – **Introduction to Basic Concepts of Audience, Purpose and Genre**
    Reading: Chapter 1

May 21 – **Writing Technical Prose & Researching Technical Subjects**
    Reading: Chapter 4
    Lab: Participation 1

May 26 – **Elements of Workplace Writing**
    Reading: Chapter 7
    Lab: Participation 2
    Assessment Due: Writing Sample 1 (Cover Letter)

May 28 – **Writing Technical Prose & Researching Technical Subjects**
    Reading: Chapter 3
    Lab: Participation 3

June 2 – **Incorporating Design into Technical Documents**
    Reading: Chapter 5
    Lab: Participation 4
    Assessment Due: Writing Sample 2 (Email)

June 4 – **Using Visuals in Technical Communication & Writing Good Instructions and Manuals**
    Reading: Chapter 6 & Chapter 10
    Lab: Participation 5 & 6

June 9 – Class Time to work on Group Project
    Assessment Due: Writing Sample 3 (PowerPoint)

June 11 – **Digital Technical Communication**
    Reading: Chapter 12
    Lab: Participation 7

June 16 – **Usability Testing**
    Reading: Chapter 11
    Lab: Participation 8
    Assessment Due: Writing Sample 4 (Instructions)

June 18 – **Creating Effective Oral Presentations**
    Reading: Chapter 13
    Lab: Group Work

June 23 – Presentations

June 25 – Class time to complete final report