

**Communications Studies (COMS) 363 – L62**  
**Professional and Technical Communication**  
**Summer 2012**  
**Mondays & Wednesdays, 18:00 – 20:50**

**Instructor:** Cassandra Dam

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**Office Hours:** Mondays, 3:30–5:30 pm or by appointment

**Course Description**

This course provides an introduction to the fundamental practices of organizational communication. Students will learn basic rhetorical techniques and apply them to produce clear, concise, well-presented information that addresses the informational needs of their intended audience while gaining knowledge and skills in writing across genres and disciplines through inquiry-based learning strategies and collaborative research projects. Emphasis is placed on how workplace communication is situated within distinct organizational or corporate cultures as well as broader socio-cultural contexts. This theory-driven class will teach students open-ended skills that can be applied to a variety of workplace situations.

**Objectives of the Course**

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Explain what technical writing is, and the importance of good communication skills in the workplace;
- Produce clear, concise writing that your intended audience can understand;
- Produce writing that adheres to professional ethical standards;
- Design visually affective documents and technical illustrations;
- Familiarity with a range of resources for professional writers, including tools for online research, for online composing, and for collaborative writing;
- Competence in the use of a standard style of documentation;
- Competence in preparing and delivering PowerPoint presentations;
- Familiarity with Internet and electronic communication device uses.

**Internet and electronic communication device information**

Please refrain from using cell phones and other hand-held communication devices and ensure they are set to silent or turned off during classes and labs. Please refrain from using social media during classes and labs unless instructed to do so. The use of electronic services such as laptops and tablets to take notes or to advance your understanding of the course material is acceptable.

**Textbooks and Readings:**

Tebeaux, E. Dragga, S. (2010). *The Essentials of technical communication*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

## Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment	Weight	Due Date
Writing Sample 1	15%	July 16
Writing Sample 2	15%	July 25
Writing Sample 3	15%	Aug 1
Writing Sample 4	15%	Aug 8
PowerPoint presentation	10%	Aug 13 & 15
Final Report	20%	Aug 20 via Blackboard
Participation in-class & online	10%	Throughout

Detailed instructions will be provided in lectures and lab, and posted online. 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.

### Description of assignments

**Writing Samples** are writing assignments covering 4 key examples of technical writing opportunities (no more than 750 words). 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 report or web content as well as job application and other professional correspondences.

**PowerPoint Group Presentation** and **Final Assignment** are linked, group assignments. These assignments will be completed in small groups.

- **PowerPoint Group 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 should be 10 minutes long and include no more than 12 slides. Each group member must present part of the presentation.
- **Final Report:** The final report is a full featured, substantive report (1750-2000 words). It will require you to conduct both secondary and primary research and integrate the results into a report.

**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; ‘participating’ is not only attendance but contributing to class discussion with quality content and participating in the creation of a positive atmosphere and learning environment. As well, throughout the course online participation will be expected. Please discuss with the instructor any questions or concerns about the participation mark as soon as possible.

**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 day late.

### **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. 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**

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 (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Taylor Digital Family Library, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>) 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**

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