Communication Studies (COMS) 363- Lecture 62
Professional and Technical Communication
Summer 2013
M/W 18:00-20:45 July 3 – August 14
No class on Heritage Day Monday August 5

Instructor: Christine Mains
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Web Page: Blackboard
Office Hours: M/W 15:00-16:30

Course Description

This course is a study of the principles and techniques of technical writing, taking a rhetorical approach to understanding effective professional and technical communication. Through assignments designed to reflect both written and oral formats common in workplace settings, students will gain expertise in analyzing and meeting the needs of a variety of audiences, including customers, co-workers, and clients. Issues such as readability, document design, the use of visuals, editing, and collaborative writing will be considered.

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 to:

- Think critically and read critically
- Adapt to communication situations based on rhetorical analysis
- Communicate effectively both through oral presentations and written documents
- Research complex problems and situations individually and collaboratively
- Understand the conventions and strategies for a range of formats
- Design documents that look professional and communicate information effectively
- Produce written documents that are focused, coherent, and readable

Internet and electronic communication device information

In the classroom, students may use laptops to take notes, but not to do personal work. In the lab, students may use laptops to work on class assignments but are responsible for making sure that the resulting assignment can be opened on the lab computers which use the same software as the instructor. At no time may students use cell phones for any reason whatsoever.

Textbook and Readings

G.J. Alred et al. (2011). *Handbook of Technical Writing* (10th edition, spiral bound).

Assignments and Evaluation

Participation	Throughout	10%
Instructions	July 9	10%
Technical Memo	July 11	10%
Professional Correspondence	July 16	10%
Progress Report	July 25	20%
Final Project: Report (Team)	August 8	25%
Final Project: Presentation (Team)	August 12-14	15%

All written assignments will be submitted through Digital Dropbox on Blackboard. No assignments will be submitted by email attachment or in hardcopy, whether handed to the instructor, dropped at the main office, or slid under office doors. It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment, and to check email regularly for notices of missing assignments. All assignments must be completed or a grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

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. Requests for extensions must be made in advance of the assignment due date, and are at the instructor's discretion.

Participation Because this course is designed to prepare students for work in technical or business communication, collaborative work is an important component. A substantial part of the grade will be based on the team project, and there will be group tasks and discussion early in the term as preparation for individual assignments as well. Participation in class tasks requires attendance; occasional absence for reasons of illness or emergency is unlikely to seriously affect the grade, but regular absence because of conflicts with work schedules or personal issues likely will.

Instructions This individual assignment is a 1-2 page document containing text and visuals, describing a step-by-step process for completing a task shown in a video posted on Blackboard.

Memo This individual assignment is a 1-page document containing text, "translating" a document made available on Blackboard into plain language for two different audiences.

Professional Correspondence This individual assignment is a 1-2 page letter following the model provided in the textbook, responding to a situation posted on Blackboard.

Progress Report This individual assignment is a 3-5 page document including an annotated bibliography of sources used for the Team Project and a brief comparative analysis of websites.

Team Project: Formal Report This group assignment will be worked on in the lab and outside of class time, as part of an assigned group. It is a 20-25 page document containing text and visuals,

including both primary and secondary research by all group members, properly edited and cited using APA.

Team Project: Presentation This group assignment includes a PowerPoint slideshow containing text and visuals; each group member will speak for 3-5 minutes.

Writing Skills Statement

Faculty 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 according to a recognized citation style (in this class either APA or MLA).

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. 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 (3rd Floor Taylor Family Digital 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

Grading System

In this class, you will receive grades in the 4-point scale (2.7, 3.0, 3.3) *rather than* percentages.

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

Letter Grade	Grading Scale	Grade Point Value (see U of C Calendar: Academic Standing)
A+	96-100	4
A	90-95.99	4
A -	85-89.99	3.7
B+	80-84.99	3.3
B	75-79.99	3
B-	70-74.99	2.7
C+	65-69.99	2.3
C	60-64.99	2
C-	55-59.99	1.7
D+	53-54.99	1.3
D	50-52.99	1
F	0-49	0

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.

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.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds

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

The following is a tentative schedule listing readings and due dates; necessary updates will be posted throughout the term through Blackboard announcements. Students are responsible for checking the Blackboard site at least once a week, well before each class, in order to keep up to date. Readings will include selections from the required textbook, as well as additional documents posted to Blackboard to support assignments as necessary.

July 3	Review of Course Outline 5 Steps to Successful Writing (xv-xxii) Description	
July 8	Instructions; Process Explanations; Telegraphic Style Memo; Lists; Headings; Affectation	Instructions due July 9
July 10	Correspondence; Letters	Memo due July 11
July 15	Collaborative Writing	Correspondence due July 16
July 17	Research Comparison	
July 22	Progress and Activity Reports Documenting Sources (APA)	
July 24	Formal Report	Progress Report due July 25
July 29	Layout & Design	
July 31	Executive Summaries; Cover Letters	
August 5	HERITAGE DAY: NO CLASS	
August 7	Proofreading Presentations; Visuals	Formal Report due August 8
August 12	Presentations: Teams TBA	PowerPoint due August 12
August 14	Presentations: Teams TBA	PowerPoint due August 14