

**Communications Studies (COMS) 363—Lecture 03**  
**Professional and Technical Communication**  
**Winter 2011**  
**Wednesdays 18:30 - 21:20**  
**ST 126**  
**January 12 - April 13**

Instructor: Prof. Gillian Steward

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Office Hours: By Appointment.

Additional Information:

- All written assignments, with the exception of the Final Report, will be submitted via Blackboard. Please make sure you know how to use Blackboard before this class gets underway.
- Because you are responsible for all material covered in class, attending all classes is strongly recommended. If you miss lectures or readings, you must make your own arrangements to catch up.
- Any student who plagiarizes his or her assignment or part of an assignment will be reported to the appropriate authorities. I do not accept any excuses for plagiarism, even “accidental” plagiarism. Please see the section on “Plagiarism” on page 4 of this outline.

Course Description

This course is an introduction to effective communication in the most common genres of professional and technical writing and speech. You will learn the processes involved in planning, composing, and delivering of technical communication for a variety of audiences and rhetorical contexts, with particular emphasis on the workplace environment. Guided practice and peer review will assist you in developing expertise in visual, electronic, print, and face-to-face communication.

Objectives of the Course

At the completion of this course, you will be able to demonstrate strong written and oral communication skills, so people both inside and outside your area of expertise can easily understand the professional and technical information you are conveying. To this end, we will study the principles and techniques of professional and technical writing, focusing on both written and oral communication skills. You will enhance your writing, editing, and speaking skills, in addition to learning to generate effective professional and technical

documents. You will also increase your abilities to read and think critically and to do rhetorical analyses of professional and technical documents.

#### Internet and electronic communication device information

- Cell phones must be put away at the start of class: there will be no texting, twittering, emailing, and so on during this class. If the activity persists, students may be asked to leave.
- Laptop computers may be used only to take notes during class. Please do not use your laptop to view non-class related content or do work not for this class. Those who do not adhere to this rule will lose laptop privileges.

#### Text Books and Readings

Our textbook is available in the University of Calgary Bookstore:

Elizabeth Tebeaux and Sam Dragga. *The Essentials of Technical Communication*. New York: Oxford, 2010. ISBN 978-0-19-538422-2

It is essential that you have this textbook available for reading. You will have a difficult time fulfilling the assignment requirements without doing the assigned background readings. It is the kind of book that you may want to keep and refer to for all sorts of writing assignments in other classes and at work.

#### Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment Name	Percent	Due Date
<b>Resume and application letter</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>January 26</b>
<b>Rewriting of a highly technical document</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>February 9</b>
<b>Project Proposal</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>February 16</b>
<b>Oral Presentations</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>March 23/30</b>
<b>Final Report</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>April 13</b>
<b>Participation and in class assignments</b>	<b>10</b>	

Oral reports may be given in groups of 2 or 3 but each member of the team is expected to contribute. If this appears not to be the case, the mark will reflect that. All the other assignments are to be completed by each student.

All written assignments are to be submitted via Blackboard. Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each working day late.

Late assignments will be graded but not marked. **Assignments more than five working days late will not be accepted.** In the case of illness, you must submit a doctor's note with your late assignment. For any other circumstance that prevents you from submitting your assignment on time, you must provide appropriate documentation to your instructor.

Please note that because all out-of-class assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade in this course, it is essential that you hand in assignments no later than five working days after the due date. If you miss your presentation, you will have to provide clear documentation justifying your absence. Otherwise, you will not pass this course.

***There is no registrar-scheduled final examination for this class.***

#### 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: [www.efwr.ucalgary.ca](http://www.efwr.ucalgary.ca)

#### **Grading System**

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture (Table 2):

Table 2: Grading System

LETTER GRADE	PERCENT
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 4<sup>th</sup> floor, [efwr.ucalgary.ca](http://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**

Each assignment requires specific readings; this information will be included with each specific assignment.