

Communications Studies COMS 363 L02
Professional and Technical Communication
Winter 2014
Mondays 12:00 - 14:45

Instructor: Lisa Bryce

Office Location: SS 304

Office Phone: Shared office: please use my cell phone number 403-708-9201 (please use with discretion)

E-Mail: bryce@ucalgary.ca

Office Hours: After class on Mondays and by appointment.

Course Description

This course will introduce you to the practical elements of professional and technical communication. You will learn how to produce documents appropriate for both workplace and academic settings that encompass both written and oral forms of professional and technical communication. Each class's activities will include practice in writing and speaking. The out-of-class assignments will contribute to your understanding of written and spoken discourse.

Course Objectives

The objectives of this course are the following:

- Learning to communicate effectively through oral presentations and written documents
- Developing expertise in the mechanics of writing: spelling, grammar, and punctuation
- Preparing various forms of documents including reports, proposals, and cover letters
- Becoming competent in finding and analyzing reliable sources to be used for producing information for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Internet and Electronic Communication Device Information

You are welcome to bring and use your laptop for in-class assignments; however, the use of laptops for any purpose unrelated to this class is not acceptable.

Cell phones must be put away during class. Texting is not permitted during class time.

Textbooks and Readings

The following textbook is required for this class. You will need to do specific readings for a full understanding of course material.

Graves, H. & Graves, R. (2012). *A Strategic Guide to Technical Communication*. Peterborough: Broadview Press.

Assignments and Evaluation

Table 1, following, gives the assignments, due dates, and percentages worth.

Table 1: Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment	Due Date	Percentage Worth
In-class assignment 1	January 27	5%
In-class assignment 2	February 10	5%
In-class assignment 3	March 3	5%
In-class assignment 4	March 10 and 17	10%
Topic approval	February 3 (email to instructor)	5%
Proposal	February 24	20%
Paper	April 14	20%
Cover letter	March 24	5%
Presentation	March 24, March 31, April 7	20%
Class participation	ongoing	5%

Assignment Descriptions

In-class Assignments

The four in-class assignments are produced collaboratively. You will work in groups of no more than three persons and prepare a written piece on the technical topic of the day as well as a 5-10 minute presentation for the class. You will be given time in class to prepare.

In-class exercise 1: extemporaneous presentation: understanding audience

In-class exercise 2: informative presentation: creating an effective document design

In-class exercise 3: demonstrative presentation: writing and presenting a set of instructions

In-class exercise 4: informative presentation: creating effective presentations

Please note that because of their nature, the in-class assignments cannot be “made up” at a later date.

Topic Approval

You will need to choose an appropriate business or technical topic for your white paper (or recommendation report) and presentation. It is essential that you discuss this topic with me before beginning the proposal and paper assignments to ensure that you are not taking on anything that will require more time than one term to complete and that the topic is one that invites analysis. For help in choosing a topic, please see the Proposal assignment specifications on Blackboard. You are welcome to brainstorm with me if you would like.

The authorization is a ½ to ¾ of a page describing the topic you wish to work on, how you will make it relevant for this course and this audience (our class), and three scholarly sources you can use for your research project. This assignment is given a grade out of 5; to receive an A, email your request for approval (bryce@ucalgary.ca) by the due date (midnight on February 3, 2014) and provide sufficient information. If some part of your topic needs clarification or if the authorization is not well written, you may receive less than an A.

Proposal

Using the topic you have received approval to do, write a proposal of 5 pages that shows your ability to follow the genre's conventions.

Cover letter

The cover letter (or transmittal letter) introduces the report to the reader. You will write this letter in class and submit a printed copy to your instructor for grading.

The White Paper OR Recommendation Report

Using the same topic that you have received approval for (topic approval) and written your proposal on, write *either* a 5-page white paper *or* a 5-page recommendation report on the business or technical topic that you have discussed and received approval for. This paper is done individually. This paper will allow you to show your ability to write in the appropriate genre.

Presentation

During the final weeks of term, you will present your individual paper to the class in a 10-minute presentation. You are evaluated on the professionalism with which you present in addition to the content of the presentation.

Class participation

Regular attendance and participation in class activities are essential components of this course. The course assignments are designed to reinforce your learning and mastery of the material through active engagement and doing. We will be doing activities each class. Being present physically in the class is not enough: you need to be involved intellectually, contributing to each other's learning and participating in the creation of a positive atmosphere and learning environment.

You do not need to complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in the course.

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

Note: Please hand in your assignments directly to your instructor. 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.

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://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:

	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 (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>

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 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 - 403-220-5333

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/ethics/cfreb>

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

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