University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communication and Media Studies COMS 363, L01
PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION
FALL 2017: Fri., Sept. 15 – Fri., Dec. 8

Instructor:	Jo-Anne Andre, M.A.
Office:	SS 300
Office Phone:	(403) 220-7429
E-Mail:	andre@ucalgary.ca (Please put 363 in the subject line)
Web Page:	D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours:	Tuesday & Thursday 3:30 to 4:30; Wednesday 2:00 to 5:00 or by appointment Monday or Friday

Course description and objectives:

An introduction to professional and technical communication. Students will learn the rhetorical dimensions of workplace settings as well as the process of planning, researching, composing, and delivering professional and technical communication for various audiences.

Additional information:

- This section is entirely web-based, with no meeting times or labs. Some group work will be required.

- This is a reading- and writing-intensive course. To do well in this course, you should budget at least 5 hours a week for readings and work on assignments and allow extra time for group meetings and work on the major usability study project.

- Draft and marked assignments may be reviewed with the instructor during office hours. If you have questions about assignment requirements, please email the instructor.

- Please check D2L frequently for course announcements and updates. In the NEWS area under the COMMUNICATION tab, sign up for an RSS feed (under More Actions). In week 1, please email yourself a test message from D2L to ensure that your D2L-linked email is working properly. Check your ucalgary email account regularly.

- Students will be assigned to marking sections, which will be set up as groups in D2L:

Marking section 1	Jo-Anne Andre	andre@ucalgary.ca
Marking sections 2 & 3	Christine Sopczak	cmsopcza@ucalgary.ca
Marking sections 4, 5, & 6	Andrea Hanslip	arhansli@ucalgary.ca
Marking sections 7 & 8	Monique Solomon	solomonm@ucalgary.ca

Objectives of the course:

The course will help you develop

- a rhetorical approach to crafting documents--one in which you critically consider your purpose, the needs of your audience, and relevant features of the context
- familiarity with the conventions and composing strategies for a range of written genres, including proposals and reports
- document design strategies to ensure that your documents and websites look professional, promote easy information retrieval, and use visuals to communicate information effectively
- writing and editing strategies to keep your writing focused, coherent, and readable
- familiarity with tools for online research and competence in using APA documentation style
- competence in preparing PowerPoint presentations.

Required textbook:

Ewald, T. (2017). *Writing in the Technical Fields: A Practical Guide.* 2ND edition. Don Mills ON: Oxford University Press.

+ additional online readings as indicated in the detailed schedule at the end of this outline.

Assignments & evaluation:

All the following assignments and quizzes must be completed in order to pass the course. Assignment guidelines are provided in the CONTENT area of D2L. Except where indicated, assignments are to be done individually.

Due	Assignment	Wt %	Overview. (See D2L ASSIGNMENTS area for detailed guidelines)
Sept. 22	Revision Task	10%	This assignment requires you to revise passages based on strategies covered in Ewald Chapters 2, 3, & 4. Upload completed tasks to D2L by 11:59 pm. (Students who join the course after Sept. 21 should contact the instructor about an extension.)
Oct. 6	Résumé & Cover Letter	15%	A resume (1-3 pages) & cover letter (1-2 pages) in response to a current online job ad. Submit these together along with a copy of the job ad in a single file. *Alternative assignment option: complete any two of the first three exercises from Ewald Chapter 6 (p. 110 to 113)--an incident report, a progress report, or a trip report based on the scenarios provided.*
Oct. 20	Usability study proposal	15%	GROUP*. Proposal for the website usability study (3 to 5 single-spaced pages plus references and appendices).
Nov. 3	Visual critique	15%	A 2-page memo evaluating an online graph and recommending improvements.
Nov. 17	Midterm exam (timed, online, open book)	15%	This timed, open-book, online exam will focus on Ewald (except for chapters 2, 3, & 4) + the Brent and Andre PPT from Nov. 17. It will comprise about 24 multiple choice questions. **The quiz will be available from 7:00 am to 11:59 pm**. From the time you open the quiz, you will have **two hours** to complete it. The quiz is to be done individually without collaboration.
Dec. 1	Usability study PPT	5%	GROUP*. PPT presentation of 8 to 10 slides providing an overview of your usability study (focus, method, key findings, & recommendations).
Dec. 8	Usability study final report	25%	GROUP*. 13 to 16 single-spaced pages + reference list. (The page count includes all report elements except the references and appendices.)

> **No registrar-scheduled exam**

* Group assignments: Students will be randomly assigned to groups of four to complete the group website usability study project and associated assignments (proposal, report, and PowerPoint). Groups will finalized the week of Sept. 25 (after the drop deadline). Only in compelling circumstances will students be allowed to opt out of this arrangement to work individually or to form their own groups. Any requests regarding group formation must be emailed to the instructor by noon Sept. 26. Please be aware that workload expectations will be the same for groups and individuals.

Group assignments should include the names of only members who contributed to the work; including names of group members who did not contribute is a form of plagiarism. Normally, all members of a group will earn the same grade for group assignments, but the instructor may adjust individual group members' grades based on peer evaluations. The instructor may administer peer evaluations to any group; peer evaluations will also be administered to any group if any member of that group so requests. (The names of group members requesting peer evaluations will be kept confidential.) A copy of the peer evaluation form will be posted on D2L.

Submission of assignments:

Please submit all written assignments to the designated drop box in D2L. Marked assignments will be available for review on D2L. For group assignments, only one group member should submit the assignments to the designated group dropbox; the marked documents will be available to all group members through the group dropbox.

Be sure to include your name and ID number on all assignments. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy

Use .docx and .pptx (or .rtf) file formats for assignments. Do not use .pdf (or Pages) file formats as markers cannot add comments to them. Include your last name(s) in your file names (e.g., *363 proposal Collins, Chu, & Malor.docx*)

Note: Students are responsible for keeping a copy of each submitted assignment and for ensuring that the correct copy of the assignment is uploaded to D2L.

Policy for late assignments:

Assignments are due at 11:59 pm on the due date, but you have a 24-hour grace period before we begin taking late penalties. In other words, an assignment due 11:59 pm Friday will not get a late penalty if it's submitted by 11:59 pm Saturday. Late assignments will normally be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late, including weekends. The 24-hour grace period applies to quiz 1 but not to the midterm exam, which must be done on the specified date.

Assignment length requirements:

Assignments more than 15% over the stated maximum length will be subject to a one-level grade penalty (e.g., from B to B-). Note that conciseness is a virtue in workplace writing.

Grade reassessments:

Within 15 days of the return of an assignment, students may request a reassessment. Such requests should be directed to the instructor (by email), be professional in tone, and clearly explain the grounds for the reassessment. Note that grades may be increased or lowered on reassessment or formal grade appeal. As explained in the *University Calendar*, reassessed grades may be further appealed at the department level within 15 days.

Student Accommodations:

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf .

Please note:

1. Students seeking accommodations for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors directly. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.

2. When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.

3. For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calenda*r at http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html and http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html

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 provided at http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/node/208 . 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

Grading system & Department of Communication, Media and Film grade scale:

Written assignments in this course will be given letter grades, except for the two quizzes, which will be given percentage 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 and interviews) 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/research/research-ethics This course has received course-based ethics approval from the Faculty Research Ethics Committee. All usability research in this course is to involve only Coms 363 students from this course section as research participants. Students must abide by the research ethics guidelines posted on D2L.

Important information, services, and contacts for students:

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (PIC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 picarts@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/
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**	 http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html 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.

Weekly syllabus for Coms 363 (L01) Fall 2016		Instructor: J. Andre
FRI.	**Due**	**Focus & Readings for this week**
Note: Most weeks, a PowerPoint will be posted to accompany the assigned chapters in Ewald. In addition to completing the assigned readings listed please review the posted PPTs (which are not listed below). All assignments are due at 11:59 pm, and all are to be uploaded to D2L. There is a 24-grace period (with no late penalty) on all assignments except for the midterm exam.		
Sept. 15		**Introduction to technical and professional writing:** **The writing process and the importance of audience, purpose, and tone.** 1. Course outline & Intro to Coms 363 (posted on D2L). 2. Ewald, Chapter 1 (p. 1 – 16) 3. + Check out Ewald, Appendix A & B (p. 269 -296) on editorial matters and Glossary of commonly misused words and phrases (p. 303-310).
Sept. 22	**Revision Task (10%)** (This assignment is based on Ewald Ch. 2, 3, & 4.	**Writing effectively: Editing for conciseness, coherence, & parallelism** 1. Ewald, Chapter 2 (p. 20 – 33) -- Technical Sentences 2. Ewald, Chapter 3 (p. 37- 44) -- Technical Paragraphs 3. Ewald, Chapter 4 (p. 49 – 65) – Parallelism, Lists, and Layout Note: Students who join the course after Sept. 21 should contact the instructor about an extension on this assignment.
Sept. 29		**Writing effective cover letters & resumes** 1. Ewald, Chapter 11 (p. 194 – 210) – Job Application Packages 2. Chong, Alan (Feb. 7, 2017) – "A Different Way of Thinking About Your Cover Letters" posted Feb. 7, 2017, on *IEEE Professional Communication Society* at http://sites.ieee.org/pcs/its-new-job-season-part-1-a-different-way-of-thinking-about-you-cover-letters/ 3. Chong, Alan – "Energize your Resume" posted June 19, 2017, on *IEEE Professional Communication Society* at http://sites.ieee.org/pcs/pitching-yourself-part-2-energize-your-resume/ 4. Government of Alberta. (2016). ALIS – Alberta Work Search Online. a) read "Choose a type of resume" and the examples provided at http://alis.alberta.ca/worksearch/resumes/types.html b) read "Tips for writing your resume" at https://alis.alberta.ca/look-for-work/resumes-and-references/tips-for-writing-your-resume/; c) scan the section on Action Words at https://alis.alberta.ca/look-for-work/resumes-and-references/use-action-words-to-get-the-job/
Oct. 6	**Resume & Cover Letter (15%).** (due 11:59 pm)	**Collaborating effectively** 1. Ewald, Chapter 8 (p. 144 – 157) – Intercultural Communication, Collaborative Writing, & Document Control 2. Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, Harvard University. (2010). *Working in groups: A note to faculty and a quick guide for students.* Retrieved from https://bokcenter.harvard.edu/working-groups Note: As your next assignment will be a group proposal for your website usability study, you should arrange an initial group meeting within the next week or so.

Oct. 13		**Writing proposals and reports. Designing usability tests. Citing sources.**
		1. Ewald, Chapter 6 (p. 84 – 109) – Technical Reports and Documents
		2. Ewald, Chapter 9 (p. 160 – 174) – References and Citations. (If you will be using APA citation style, scan APA materials provided on D2L.)
		3. Ewald, Appendix C (p. 297 – 301) – Ethics
		4. Ewald, Section on usability (p. 242-244)
		5. Jerz, D. (2010). Usability testing: 8 quick tips for designing tests. At http://jerz.setonhill.edu/design/usability/tips.htm
		6. U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. (n.d). [Sections on usability basics, methods, & guidelines]. At http://www.usability.gov
		7. See assignment guidelines on D2L for the Website Usability Project and sample reports posted. (The guidelines cover the proposal, final report, and PowerPoint assignments.)
		Optional background reading on the history of usability testing: Redish, J. (2010). Technical communication and usability: Intertwined strands and mutual influences." *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication, 53*(3), 191-201. Retrieved July 14, 2017, from http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/stamp/stamp.jsp?arnumber=5556477
Oct. 20	**Usability Study Proposal (15%)**	**Writing for the web** (useful for your usability study report) 1. **Scan** -- Lynch, P. J. & Horton, S. (2009). *Web style guide, 3rd ed.* At http://webstyleguide.com/wsg3/index.html 2. Morkes, J. & Nielsen, J. (1997). Concise, scannable, and objective: How to write for the web. At http://www.useit.com/papers/webwriting/writing.html
Oct. 27		**Writing effective correspondence & Designing and using visuals** 1. Ewald, Chapter 5 (p. 69 – 79) – Routine Correspondence 2. Ewald, Chapter 10 (p. 177-190) – Technical Graphics
		Other recommended (not required) readings: • Wainer, H. (1992). Understanding graphs and tables. *Educational Researcher, 21*(1), 14-23. At http://www.jstor.org/stable/1176346?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents • Few, S. (2007). Save the pies for dessert. At http://www.perceptualedge.com/articles/08-21-07.pdf • North Carolina State University (NCSU). (2004). LabWrite Resources, at http://labwrite.ncsu.edu/res/res-homepage.htm
Nov. 3	**Visual Critique (15%)**	**Writing Formal Reports** 1. Ewald, Chapter 7 (p. 114 – 142) – Formal Reports 2. Review assignment guidelines & sample reports
Nov. 10	**Reading day**	*Read ahead as there is a midterm exam next week.*

Nov. 17	**Midterm Exam (15%)** (timed, 2 hrs, online) *N.B. This timed exam must be done today, between 7:00 am and 11:59 pm.*	Writing Instructions, Procedures, and Manuals. Designing PPT Presentations. 1. Ewald, Chapter 13 (all) – Instructions, Procedure, and Manuals 2. Ewald, Chapter 11, esp. "Designing and Using Slides" (p. 258-263) 3. Brent, D., & Andre, J. (2011). Using PowerPoint Intelligently [PPT on D2L] Note: This timed, open-book, online quiz will focus on all Ewald readings (except for chapters 2, 3, & 4) + the Brent and Andre PowerPoint for Nov. 17. The exam will consist of about 24 multiple choice questions. From the time you open the quiz, you will have two hours to complete it. The quiz is to be done individually without collaboration. Access the quiz on D2L under ASSESSMENTS→ Quizzes.
Nov. 24		*No readings. Work on your group usability study, final report, and PowerPoint*
Dec. 1	**Usability Study PPT (5%)**	*No readings. Work on your group usability study, final report, and PowerPoint*
Dec. 8	**Usability Study Final Report (25%)**	*No readings. Work on your group usability study final report*