

**Communications Studies COMS 363 L21**  
**Professional and Technical Communication**  
**MW 18:30 - 21:15 ES 054**

**Instructor:** Richard Brock  
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**Office Hours:** MW 17:15-18:15

### **Calendar Description**

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

### **Description and Objectives**

In this class you'll learn about the professional and rhetorical expectations for communication in a variety of contexts. We'll begin by considering how audience and purpose shape our approach to communication, and our first assignment will relate to the proper composition of a professional workplace email. Later assignments will cover instructional documents, research plans and reports, with an emphasis on appropriate register and diction throughout.

### **Internet and electronic communication device information**

Cellphones and other communication devices should be turned off at all times. Laptops are not normally committed in class for note-taking purposes, though you are permitted to bring your laptop as an aid to oral presentations. If there are reasons why you believe you should be exempt from these rules (for example, a learning disability), please contact me before the term starts or at the first class to discuss these reasons with me.

### **Textbooks and Readings:**

Heather and Roger Graves, *A Strategic Guide to Technical Communication* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2007) is our sole text and is available in the bookstore.

### **Assignments and Evaluation**

Professional email writing assignment, due May 18 (10%)

In-class writing assignments, due dates TBA by negotiation (3 x 5% = 15%)  
Instructional manual, due June 1 (20%)  
Individual proposal for group project (detailing your role within group project), due June 8 (20%)  
Group project oral presentation, on either June 20 or June 22 (10%)  
Individual report on group project, due June 22 (25%)

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.

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

### **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 (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/cfrieb>

## **Schedule of Lectures and Readings**

May 11: Introduction; audience and purpose; professional emailing (Graves & Graves ch. 1)

w/c May 16: Instructional documents (G&G ch. 8-9)

w/c May 23: Technical prose and document design (G&G ch. 4-5)

w/c May 30: Proposal writing; conducting research (G&G ch. 6, ch. 3)

w/c June 6: Presenting information part 1 (G&G ch. 2)

w/c June 13: Presenting information part 2 (G&G ch. 10-11)

w/c June 20: Group presentations