

**Communication Studies (COMS) 363- Lecture 22**  
**Professional and Technical Communication**  
**Spring 2011**  
**T/Th 11:00-13:45 ES054 & SS018**  
**(no class Thursday, June 2: Reading Day)**

**Instructor:** Christine Mains  
**Office Location:** SS209  
**Office Phone:** 220-7789  
**E-Mail:** cmains@ucalgary.ca  
**Web Page:** Blackboard  
**Office Hours:** T/Th 14:00-15:00

### **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 any other work (such as Facebook or checking email). 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 (see the instructions for Using Digital Dropbox on Blackboard). At no time may students use cell phones for any reason whatsoever.

## **Textbook and Readings:**

G.J. Alred et al. (2009). *Handbook of Technical Writing* (9th edition).

## **Assignments and Evaluation**

Instructions	May 17	5%
Technical Memo	May 19	5%
Professional Correspondence Portfolio	May 26	5%
In-Class Midterm Exam	May 31	10%
Proposal for Final Project (Team)	June 7	5%
Final Project: Presentation (Team)	June 14-16	15%
Final Project: Report (Team)	June 23	25%
Take-Home Exam	June 29	20%
Attendance & Participation	throughout	10%

**All written assignments will be submitted through Digital Dropbox on Blackboard.** No assignments will be submitted 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.

**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.

## **Attendance and Participation**

Because this course is designed to prepare students for work in technical or business communication, collaborative work is an important component. Much of the grade will be based on the team project, and there will be group work early in the term as preparation for individual assignments as well. Students will not automatically receive the team grade if they do not contribute meaningfully and substantially to the team's success. Therefore it is essential that all students attend all classes; occasional absence for reasons of illness or emergency can be accommodated, but regular absence because of conflicts with work schedules or personal issues cannot. Students should consider this course as a commitment equal to that expected of a career-oriented job.

## **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**

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

### **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:  
(Revised, effective September 2008)

Letter Grade	Grading Scale	Grade Point Value (see <a href="#">U of C Calendar: Academic Standing</a> )
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

### **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**

The reading schedule 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.