Communications Studies (COMS) 363 – Lecture 24
Professional and Technical Communication
Spring 2012
MW 3:00 – 5:50 pm

Instructor: Yuri Yerastov, Ph.D.

Office Location: SS 209

E-Mail: yerastov@ucalgary.ca

Office Hours: 1:00 – 2:00 pm

Course 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.

Prerequisites: Completion of 4 or more full-course equivalents.

Objectives of the Course
1. To develop a rhetorical approach to crafting documents;
2. To understand current theories of genre, and apply them to technical and professional communication;
3. To perfect your command of style;
4. To learn document design strategies;
5. To become competent in preparing powerpoint presentations.

Electronic Devices
You are allowed to use laptops in class but only for purposes related to this course. Please turn your cell phones off.

Textbooks and Readings
Graves, H. & Graves, R. (2007). A strategic guide to technical communication. Peterborough ON: Broadview Press.

Additional required readings will be posted on Blackboard.

Assignments and Evaluation
Quizzes (6 * 2%)

Quiz 1: Chapter 1	due May 14	2%
Quiz 2: Editing	due May 16	2%
Quiz 3: Editing	due May 16	2%
Quiz 4: APA style	due May 23	2%
Quiz 5: Style & Coherence	due May 28	2%

Quiz 6: Chapters 5 & 6	May 30	2%
Postings on Blackboard	due May 16	8%
Project proposal	due May 23	15%
Writing in the workplace assignment	due May 30	20%
Powerpoint presentation	due June 13	10%
Final report with letter of transmittal	due June 20	30%
Participation/ attendance		5%

Quizzes
You will be quizzed on the content of course readings. Quizzes are to be taken out of class on Blackboard by the midnight of the due date.

Postings on Blackboard
You will be asked to post your responses to selected course readings on Blackboard. Your responses should engage other relevant literature you may have read and your relevant life experiences. They should be in sentence form and fall within the range of 200 to 300 words.

Writing in the workplace assignment
You will write an 800-1200 word memo to a hypothetical boss about the use of wikis as a collaborative writing tool. Using secondary research, you will advocate for the use of a specific wiki and attempt to persuade your boss to adopt your choice.

Project proposal, powerpoint presentation, and final report
All of these assignments are components of a research project in which you will study the usability of a website or instructional manual of your choice. Because the pedagogy in this course is based on the process approach, all these assignments are linked. The proposal sets out the research that you will do in the final assignment, and the powerpoint assignment requires you to present an overview of that research to a hypothetical audience. You should read all three parts of the assignment available on Blackboard before completing the proposal.

Proposal
For the final report research project, you will propose, conduct, and report on a usability study of a website. Your project proposal will describe the focus of, and proposed research approach for, your project. If you do the project as a group project, all group members will normally receive the same grade on the proposal and final report.

Powerpoint presentation
The goal of your presentation is for you to receive feedback on your analysis for incorporation into your final report. The topic of your presentation is an overview of your final research project. You are expected to focus specifically on the website you analyzed, your usability testing process, your key findings (conclusions), and your recommendations. You should orient the audience to the project and contain enough detail to help them understand what you did and what your key findings were.

The audience for your presentation will be your instructor and classmates. If you are completing the final project as a group, the powerpoint should be prepared as a group.

Final report
In your final report, you will present the findings of your usability study of a website. Your entire final report should be 11 to 16 single-spaced pages, containing the following components:

- o Title page (1 page)
- o Executive summary (1 page)
- o Table of contents & List of figures and tables (2 pages)
- o Introduction and Methods sections (1 to 2 pages)
- o Findings (and discussion) – the Body of your report (4 to 6 pages)
- o Conclusions and Recommendations (1 to 3 pages)
- o Reference list in APA format (with at least 5 sources) (1 page)
- o Appendices (not included in the length requirements)

Your report should include at least one visual, either a table or graph, to illustrate some of the points you make in your analysis of findings.

Participation
In order to receive a good participation mark, you must regularly attend and engage in the class exercises and/or discussions.

Submission of assignments
It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment. All assignments are to be submitted electronically via Blackboard; the allowable file formats for your submissions are .rtf, .doc, .docx. No hard copies/ email attachments will be accepted. If you require an extension in exceptional circumstances, please let me know.

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

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 Digital Family

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 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

Please consult Blackboard for weekly schedules of class activities and homework assignments.