

**FACULTY OF ARTS****DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE**

Professional and Technical Communication

Spring 2012

COMS 363 - Lecture 27

Tuesdays and Thursdays 18-20.50

Classes: May 9- June 22, 2012

**Instructor**

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Pilar Aguilar

Office: SS209

Email: [mpaguila@ucalgary.ca](mailto:mpaguila@ucalgary.ca)Office Hours: Mondays 2.30-3.30pm; Wednesdays 11.30-12.30 pm or by appointment**Contact Policy:**

- The best way to contact me is by email. I am very approachable, so please do not feel or assume that I am “too busy” to talk with you. If I am too busy at that particular moment, I will tell you and offer an alternative time.
- I will make every effort to reply to emails promptly, but please allow 48 hours for a response.

## Calendar Course Description

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This course is an introduction to professional and technical communication, both written and oral. In this course, 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.

## Objectives of the Course

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By the end of this course, students should have the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to:

- ◆ Plan, compose, and deliver professional communication for various audiences.
- ◆ Develop a rhetorical approach to crafting professional documents--one in which students critically consider their purpose in writing, the needs of their audience(s), and any other relevant features of the context in which they are writing.
- ◆ Develop writing strategies to keep their writing focused, coherent, clear, and professional.
- ◆ Effectively apply the conventions of composing strategies for a range of written genres, including business correspondence, proposals, and reports.
- ◆ Master a range of resources for professional writers, including tools for online research, for online composing, and for collaborative writing.
- ◆ Develop document design strategies to ensure that their documents look professional, promote easy ways to locate information, and use visuals to communicate information effectively.

## Laptop and Electronic Device Policy

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Please make sure to turn off all electronic devices during lectures. If you plan to use a laptop to take notes, please sit in the front two rows of the lecture hall. If your laptop use becomes distracting to those around you, I reserve the right to ask you revert to paper and pen for your note taking. Please refrain from using web-based applications during lecture. However, if there are reasons why you believe you should be exempt from these rules (for example, a learning disability) please contact me as soon as possible.

## Textbooks and Readings

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Heather and Roger Graves. *A Strategic Guide to Technical Communication* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2007).

\*Additional readings and resource materials will be posted on Blackboard.

## Assignments and Evaluation

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- Professional Correspondence Writing Assignment (CV and cover letter). The cover letter should be between 1-2 double-spaced pages in total → due May 17 (10%)
- Visual Assignment and Short Paper (500-700 words; 1-2 double-spaced pages) → due June 7 (15%)
- Proposal for the Project (3-5 double-spaced pages) + Annotated Bibliography (6 sources min; 4-5 double-spaced pages) → due May 29 (15%)
- Progress Report (3-4 double-spaced pages) → due June 12 (10%)

- Project (on one of the main genres of technical communication; 15 -20 double-spaced pages) →due June 21 (30%)
- Participation → Ongoing (10%)
- In-Class Writing → Ongoing (10%)

\*Additional detailed instructions and marking rubrics will be handed out on the first day of class. I will also post a copy on Blackboard.

\*\*\*Please note: In order to qualify for a passing mark in this course you must complete all components of the course.

### **Additional Information**

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- Professional Correspondence Writing Assignment (Cv and cover letter). The cover letter should be between 1-2 double-spaced pages in total →due May 17 (10%).

Find a job advertisement for a position you are currently qualified for and prepare an application package (cover letter and Cv) in response to that advertisement.

Please submit a copy of the job posting with your assignment.

- Visual Assignment and Short Paper (500-700 words; 1-2 double spaced pages) →due June 7 (15%)

You will design a visual and write a short paper (500-700 words max; 1-2 double spaced pages) explaining the reasoning behind your choices in creating the visual.

- Proposal for Project: + Annotated Bibliography → due May 29 (15%)
  - a) You will choose a business or technical topic and individually produce a 3-5 double-spaced page proposal demonstrating competence in illustrating the conventions of the appropriate genre. The aim of this exercise is to describe your project as clearly as possible, laying out the topic of the project, how you are going to go about your project, and the anticipated conclusion/result. A well-crafted proposal demonstrates that you have done sufficient preliminary research and analysis of the topic and that you have a workable outline for your project. Your proposal should be detailed enough so your instructor could determine its suitability for the project.
  - b) Annotated Bibliography (4-5 double-spaced pages) :

The annotated bibliography should include a minimum of six entries (minimum of two relevant academic articles from a scholarly journal; minimum of two relevant books; maximum of two academic websites. You should provide a summary of each source and explain how it will be used in the project.
- Progress Report → due June 12 (10%)

You will write a 4-5 double spaced page status/progress report on your final project. You should focus on what work has been completed, what remains to be done, and how you are planning to complete your project.
- Project (on one of the main genres of technical communication). The length of this assignment will vary depending on the topic, but write no more than 20 double-spaced pages. → due June 21 (30%)

I will distribute a list of topics on the first day of class. Please chose a topic and email it to me for approval as soon as possible.

- Participation 10%: In this course, knowledge is created collaboratively by students and the instructor in the classroom. Since participation is an integral factor in this kind of collaborative learning environment, students are encouraged to attend regularly and participate actively if they expect to do well. Note that participation is not only attendance per se, but rather contributing to each others' learning and participating in the creation of a positive learning environment.

So→ the participation mark in this course is divided into two components: half of the mark will be assessed on the quality and thoughtfulness of a total of 2 discussion questions formulated for a participation class discussion; the other half will represent the student's attendance and contribution to classroom discussion.

Note: Discussion questions should be posted on Blackboard at least 48 hours before class.

- In-Class Writing 10%: will be based on 5 short writing exercises assigned and completed in class (and/or between one class and the next). In-class assignments cannot be made up at a later date.

Note: There will be a total of 6 in-class writing exercises, but I will only take the best 5 for your grade.

## Submission of Assignments

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All work (written and otherwise) is due in hard copy at the START of the lecture on the assignment due date. If you cannot be in class, please make arrangements to hand in your assignment early or have a classmate hand in it for you. Please note that electronic submissions will not be accepted, even as proof of your assignments having been completed.

Alternately, you may take your assignments to SS320 and place it in the drop-box. Your assignment will then be date-stamped and placed in your instructor's mailbox. Please keep a copy of your assignment in case of loss by any cause.

No extensions will be granted for course work except in cases of illness or severe personal distress (appropriate documentation will be required). **Late assignments will be penalized** with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each business day late. Computer or printer malfunctions are not exceptions to the submission policy, so please plan accordingly.

### **What you can expect from your instructor before you submit papers or projects for grading**

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Questions with respect to assignments are welcome anytime, but please ensure that all questions and confusions are resolved 48 hours prior to the assignment due date. While I will gladly look at draft, I will not edit or proofread students' drafts. Rather, I will identify the most problematic elements of the document and discuss concerns with you, but it is up to you to make necessary changes.

## What you can expect when you submit papers or projects for grading

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I make every effort to return papers and projects within one week. Occasionally, however, other professional obligations make this impossible. I will advise you of this when the work is submitted and let you know when you can anticipate return.

I make comments in the margins of written work and also provide a typed up feedback page. Should these comments be insufficient for you to understand your grade, please make an appointment with me to discuss the paper. If you cannot read my handwriting, or you do not understand some of my comments please ask about that too. While I make every attempt to be legible and clear, sometimes students need further clarification and that is totally acceptable.

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No**

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## Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

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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

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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: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>.

## Grading System

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The following grading system is used in this course:

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

\*Note: I will assign a letter grade and a percentage to each assignment. The assigned percentage will be used to calculate your final grade.

## Plagiarism

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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.

If you have any questions regarding how to document sources please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (Taylor Family Digital Library, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor) or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

## Classroom Conduct

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Successful students conduct themselves in a professional manner because university is a professional environment.

Successful students are ready to start class at the appropriate time and have their notebooks open and their pens ready to take notes, because diligently taking notes and being attentive during class shows a professor that the student is serious and wants to learn.

Successful students ask questions about anything in class they do not understand, but they do not engage in side conversations and whispering as this is very disruptive and distracting to others around them.

Successful students are attentive during class; they do not doze off, do homework for other classes, organize their bags or purses, or compose letters to friends. They are also aware of those around them and are sensitive to what might offend, so they do not engage in personal relationships during class, and they choose language that will not be considered offensive.

### **Academic Misconduct**

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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**

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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**

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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**

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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**

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For information on the emergency evacuation procedures and the assembly points see

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

## **"SAFEWALK" Program -- 220-5333**

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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**

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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**

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A daily schedule of lectures and readings will be handed out on the first day of class.  
I will also post a copy on Blackboard.