

**University of Calgary**  
**Department of Communication and Culture**

**Communications Studies (COMS) 363 - Lecture 05**  
**Professional and Technical Communication**  
**Spring 2014**  
**Lecture: MW 15:00-17:45**

**Instructor:** Dr. Shawn Mueller  
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**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Course Description**

This course is an introduction to effective communication in the most common genres of professional and technical writing and speech. You will learn the processes involved in planning, composing, and delivering of technical communication for a variety of audiences and rhetorical contexts. Guided practice and peer review will assist you in developing expertise in visual, electronic, print, and face-to-face communication.

**Prerequisite or Corequisite:** Completion of four or more full-course equivalents

**Objectives of the Course:**

This course is designed to assist in the development of strong written and oral communication skills, so people both inside and outside your area of expertise can easily understand the professional and technical information you are conveying. To this end, we will study the principles and techniques of professional and technical writing, focusing on both written and oral communication skills. We will work to build strong writing, editing, and speaking skills, while learning to generate effective professional and technical documents. Attention will also be paid to critical and rhetorical analyses of professional and technical documents. More specifically, students who successfully complete this course should be able to:

- ▲ [Learn to communicate effectively through written and oral communication;
- ▲ Demonstrate expertise in the foundational skills of written discourse: spelling grammar and punctuation;
- ▲ Prepare various forms of documents, including reports, proposals and professional letters;
- ▲ Become competent in finding and analyzing sources to be used in the preparation of research and other professional documents for presentation to a variety of audiences.

**Internet and electronic communication device information**

No restriction on the use of laptops (ipads, netbooks, etc.) in class if they are used to take notes or find information relevant to the class, and if there is no disturbance of other students or the instructor. Phones must be turned off during class time unless you are a health care or law enforcement professional with appropriate ID.

## Textbooks and Readings:

*Effective Communication for the Technical Professions*, (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed) Jennifer MacLennan, Oxford, 2008. **This text is available (free) as an e-book through the University of Calgary Library. Hard copy is, of course, available for purchase in the Bookstore.**

Other selected readings will be assigned via Desire to Learn (D2L).

## Assignments and Evaluation

The main deliverables for this course will be a technical writing report and an oral presentation on its contents. The project should involve the application of multiple technical communication skills, including the incorporation of graphic elements (charts, graphs, tables, maps and other illustrations). This project will be outlined extensively during the first meeting on May 14, 2014.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Details</u>
<b>In-class assignments</b> (written and oral)	<b>20% (total)</b>	In-class exercises designed to build understanding of concepts and skills discussed in assigned readings. May be individual or collaborative in nature. <b><i>Please note that in-class assignments cannot be 'made up' at a later date.</i></b>
<b>Topic Submission</b>	<b>5%</b>	Statement of topic to be developed into research project. <b>Due Date: May 21</b>
<b>Research Proposal</b>	<b>20%</b>	4-5 page proposal outlining the work to be done, work plan timeline, and preliminary list of resources. <b>Due Date: June 2</b>
<b>Final Report</b>	<b>30%</b>	10-15 page formal report; may incorporate tables, charts, graphs and illustrations where appropriate. Proper referencing must be utilized. <b>Due Date: June 18</b>
<b>Research Presentation</b>	<b>25%</b>	10-15 minute oral summary of the report's contents. Presentation software may be used but is not necessary. <b>Presentation Dates: June 23/25</b>

You do not need to complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in the course. However, failure to complete any assignment will significantly impact your final grade. Any request for late submission of any assignment should be made in advance and **MUST** be accompanied by appropriate documentation.

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment.

**Note:** All assignments will be submitted electronically via D2L. Assignment submission procedures will be discussed in depth during the introductory lecture on May 14.

**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. Please contact the instructor if you are having difficulty completing any assignment.

### **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://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**

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 (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Taylor Family Digital 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 Student Accessibility Services (220-8237, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>) 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.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

### **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/ethics/cfreb>

## Schedule of Lectures and Readings

This is designed to be a flexible schedule. When and how certain topics are covered in class may change. Students are strongly advised to keep up with the reading schedule to ensure full benefit of class discussion. PLEASE NOTE, THERE IS NO LECTURE ON MONDAY, MAY 19, DUE TO THE VICTORIA DAY HOLIDAY.

Week	Topic/Reading	Assignments
Week 1 (May 14)	<b>Introduction to course</b> Outline and syllabus; <u>Reading:</u> MacLennan - Ch 1 & 4 - emphasis on Ch. 1	
Week 2 (May 21) <b>No class May 19 (Victoria Day)</b>	<b>Ethics</b> <u>Reading:</u> MacLennan - Ch 2, 3 & 5	<b>Assignment 1 Due May 21</b>
Week 3 (May 26,28)	<b>Reports, Technical Description and Quality of Thinking</b> <u>Reading:</u> MacLennan - Ch 6 & 7	
Week 4 (June 2, 4)	<b>Analytical Design</b> <u>Reading:</u> MacLennan - Ch 8	<b>Assignment 2 Due June 2</b>
Week 5 (June 9, 11)	<b>Practical Application</b> <u>Reading:</u> MacLennan - Ch 9	
Week 6 (June 16, 18)	<b>Careers &amp; Employment</b> <u>Reading:</u> MacLennan - Ch 10	<b>Assignment 3 Due June 18</b>
Week 7 (June 23, 25)	Presentations Closing Remarks	<b>Assignment 4 (Presentation) on assigned date</b>