University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communications Studies COMS 363 L01
Professional and Technical Communication
Spring 2016
May 9-June 30 (excluding May 23, 30, June 1)

Monday and Wednesday: 12:00-2:45 PM

Instructor: Prof. Bryce
Office: Social Sciences 216
E-Mail: bryce@ucalgary.ca
Office Hours: Thursdays: 1:00-3:00 and by appointment

Course Description

This course will introduce you to the practical elements of professional and technical communication. You will learn how to produce documents appropriate for the workplace and academic settings that encompass both written and oral forms of professional and technical communication. Our class assignments include practice in writing and speaking. The individual assignments will allow you to apply what you have learned to create quality documents.

Objectives of the Course

The objectives of this course are the following:

- Learning to communicate effectively through oral presentations and written documents
- Developing expertise in the mechanics of writing: spelling, grammar, and punctuation, sentence structure, paragraphs
- Preparing various forms of documents including reports, proposals, literature reviews, summaries, and cover letters
- Becoming competent in finding and analyzing reliable sources to be used for producing information for a variety of audiences and purposes.
- Learning document design techniques to create documents and websites that look professional and enable users to find and use information easily.

Textbooks and Readings

Our textbook is available in the University of Calgary bookstore both in hard copy and as an e-book.

Ewald, T. (2014) *Writing in the Technical Fields: A Practical Guide.* Oxford University Press.

Internet and electronic communication device information

To ensure everyone has equal opportunity to listen and learn without distraction, please put away your cell phone during class time: texting, twittering, emailing, and so on interferes with the learning environment, both for students and the instructor. Please respect your classmates' right to hear class material.

You are welcome to bring and use your laptop for assignments and other course work for this class. Please do not use your laptop for purposes not related to the class material of the day.

Recording any part of any lecture in any form without permission is not permitted. Lecture slides will not be posted on the web. Photographing lecture slides is not permitted. These restrictions are due to copyright and intellectual property issues and are strictly enforced.

Assignments and Evaluation
Table 1, following, lists the assignments, due dates, and percentage worth.

Assignment	Worth	Due Date	Individual	Group
Instructions	5%	May 9	✓	
Reading quiz	5%	May 11	✓	
Correspondence	5%	May 16	✓	
References and citations assignment	10%	May 18	✓	
Reading quiz	5%	May 25	✓	
Technical graphics	5%	May 25	✓	
Proposal	10%	June 6		✓
Literature review	15%	June 15	✓	
Report	25%	June 22		✓
Report presentation	10%	June 22 or 27 or 29		✓
Peer evaluations of presentations	5%	June 22, 27, 29	✓	

There is no registrar-scheduled final examination for this course.

To receive a passing grade in this course, you must complete the following assignments:
- **references and citations**
- **proposal**
- **literature review**
- **report**
- **report presentation**

Assignment Details and Descriptions
This section gives an overview of the guidelines for each assignment for this course. Detailed guidelines for each assignment will be given out in class.

Reading quiz 1 (May 11): Chapters 1, 2,
Reading quiz 2 (May 25): Chapters 3, 4
Quizzes will be a combination of fill in the blank, matching, and short answer questions. These quizzes will help you assess your learning and comprehension of the course material.

Instructions
Writing and following instructions: You will prepare a set of instructions for a particular procedure. These instructions will be tested by another person in the class. Please submit a printed copy (hard copy) of these instructions to your instructor as well as to the D2L dropbox.

Correspondence
Writing a formal letter: you will write a letter on an assigned topic that reflects your ability to create appropriate content, organize information, and follow letter format and conventions. Please submit a printed copy (hard copy) of these instructions to your instructor as well as to the D2L dropbox.

References and Citations
Finding and citing scholarly sources: we will meet in the library for this class. Our librarian will show you an efficient process for finding high quality sources that you can use in your proposal, literature review, report, and individual presentation.

This assignment has two parts:
1. At the end of the library session, you will need to submit a list of three sources formatted in APA or IEEE and listed as you would on a references page for a document.
2. Write 3-5 sentences in which you tell me why you have chosen the three sources on your references page.
   - In one of these sentences, quote one of the sources and cite the source correctly.
   - Paraphrase one or two sentences from one of the sources and cite the source correctly.

Please submit a printed copy (hard copy) of this assignment to your instructor as well as to the D2L dropbox. Please print on both sides of the page.

Technical Graphics
Creating a prototype/mock up for a business's home page. Using the website usability criteria you have found so far, prepare a prototype/mock up for a particular type of business. The list of possible business types will be handed out during class.

> The references and citation assignment, proposal, literature review, report, and presentation are focused on a particular type of website that you will choose from a list given out in class or from a website you have found yourselves and that has been approved by your instructor. **You will want to take several screenshots and make detailed notes about the website in case it suddenly disappears.** Having these available will help decrease the stress of no longer having your website available for your report and presentation.

Group Proposal
Following the guidelines in the textbook and covered in class, you need to conduct preliminary research and write a 5-page (about) proposal describing your report and report/project/final presentation. The proposal must include the website you have chosen to analyze and recommend changes for. You are writing for an audience that is made up of your instructor and your classmates. The page length does not include the references page or the appendices.

The proposal must do the following:

- Present a specific research question that you and your group members have narrowed down from your initial thoughts on your chosen website and that you have found scholarly support for
- Present a specific scope (boundaries) of your research
- Cite relevant, scholarly sources
- Describe the necessary tasks (each member of the group must be responsible for researching, writing, and editing the report, and contributing to the presentation
- Present a sufficiently detailed schedule
- Describe your qualifications for this project
- Include a performance contract
- Include your usability study questions

The proposal must be written in the form of a memo that follows the conventions of page design shown in the textbook and covered in class. Please separate the proposal sections with headings, use an appropriate amount of white space between sections and paragraphs, and number the pages. The proposal will be graded on format and writing, as well as content.

Literature Review
Write a short literature review that is the equivalent in length to 4-5 pages single spaced. Your review should include *no fewer than eight peer-reviewed journal articles*. Beyond this constraint, there is no limit to the number of sources you include although no more than one can be by Jakob Nielsen. Please try to use the most recent articles you can find.

This review is your preparation for your research report; it will suggest how the review findings will lead to the analysis and recommendations about your website in your report and final presentation. You are summarizing, evaluating, and *comparing* and *contrasting* scholarly, high quality sources into one document to show where your research is heading and the areas on which you are focusing in the report and presentation.

Remember to divide the literature review into sections, each with a descriptive heading that identifies precisely what you are discussing in that section. Your review needs an introduction, main points, support points, and a conclusion. Remember to give each paragraph a topic sentence, supporting points, and a concluding sentence.

Group Recommendation Report
Using the guidelines from the textbook and covered in class, write a recommendation report in which you analyze the same website you discussed in your proposal and literature review. The analysis should incorporate, build on, and add to the scholarly resources you found for your proposal and literature review. After you have analyzed the website and discussed its strengths and weaknesses, describe ways that it can be improved (recommendations).

Your research findings will help you direct and organize your points. The report should be 15 to 20 pages including graphics. This page count does not include the transmittal letter, title page, executive summary, table of contents, references, or appendices.

To make the report stronger, I recommend that you also do primary research--an anonymous class survey on the website's usability. Please see the section on Research Ethics on page 7.

Group Presentation
During the final weeks of term, you will present your report to the class in a 15 minute presentation. You are evaluated on the professionalism with which you present in addition to the content of the presentation.

Peer Evaluation of Final/Report/Project Presentations
You will need to give your instructor a written evaluation of each group's presentation. Please evaluate each presentation following the criteria in Chapter 14 and covered in class.

Submission of Assignments
Please hand in your assignments directly to your 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. **For each assignment, please also submit a backup copy to D2L.**

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at marked final exams in SS 320. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy

Note: It is all students' responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in the file name may be useful.

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. In-class assignments cannot be "made up" at a later date. These assignments are the quizzes, instructions, correspondence assignment, and the technical graphics assignment.
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Student Accommodations
Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf.

- Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.

- When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.

- For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calenda*r at http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html and http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in 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 and Grade Scale of the Department of Communication, Media and Film

All grades are reported as letter grades.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept. of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations**
4.00	Outstanding	**A+**	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	**A**	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70		**A -**	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30		**B+**	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good--clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	**B**	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70		**B-**	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30		**C+**	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	**C**	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70		**C-**	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	**D+**	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00		**D**	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	**F**	0- 49.99%	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. In-text citations must be provided,

and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436 . If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor TFDL, http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support).

Academic Misconduct
For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html

Research Ethics
Whenever you perform research with human participants (e.g., surveys, interviews, or observations) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics

One approved exception is for usability studies in COMS 363 in which students may conduct anonymous online usability surveys to get their classmates' opinions on the usability of a website. This is what we will be doing for our course.

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support • IT help line	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE • Writing Support Services	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support

• Student Services Mobile App	http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman	 https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds
SU WELLNESS CENTRE • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress Centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips	**403-210-9355** (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health **403-266-HELP (4357)** http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

Date	Assigned Readings	Page numbers
May 9	Chapter 1: Introduction Chapter 4: Parallelism, Lists, and Layout Chapter 13: Instructions	1-17 44-60 207-222
May 11	Chapter 2: Technical sentences Chapter 6: Proposals Chapter 9: References and Citations (IEEE for engineering and computer science students) APA	18-32 86-90 140-153 APA handout
May 16	Chapter 3: Technical Paragraphs Chapter 5: Routine correspondence	34-42 62-72
May 18	Chapter 9: References and Citations Review APA handout or IEEE method (Chapter 9)	140-153
May 23	Victoria Day: no class	
May 25	Review Chapter 4: Parallelism, Lists, and Layout Chapter 10: Technical graphics	44-60 155-168
May 30	Congress: no class	
June 1	Congress: no class	
June 6	Writing the literature review	lecture notes
June 8	Class topic and readings will be decided from class needs and interests.	

June 13	Class topic and readings will be decided from class needs and interests.	
June 15	Chapters 6 and 7: Writing reports Chapter 14: Oral Presentations	74-124 224-239
June 20	Review Chapter 14: Oral presentations	
June 22	Review Chapter 14 and notes from in-class presentations	
June 27	Review Chapter 14 and notes from in-class presentations	
June 29	Review Chapter 14 and notes from in-class presentations	