

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

COMS 363 (L03): Professional and Technical Communication

Spring 2021: May 5 – June 17 (excluding May 24)

Lecture: Web-based

Instructor:	Erin Woodford
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Office Phone:	N/A
Email:	Erin.woodford@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours:	Mondays 6:00 to 8:00 pm via Zoom or by appointment. Zoom link available on D2L.

Course Description

An introduction to professional and technical communication in diverse media. Examines the rhetorical dimensions of workplace settings as well as the process of planning, composing and delivering professional and technical communication for various audiences.

Additional Information

This section of the course will be offered entirely online. There are no face-to-face classes or tutorials in this course, and no requirement to be present on campus. Student-Instructor interaction will be provided by online forums, email, Zoom drop in, or by appointment via Zoom. Wherever possible, this course is designed to use mobile-friendly apps for learning to enhance your professional and technical communication skills.

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found on D2L. Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.

Objectives of the Course

By the end of this course, students should be able to

- Approach workplace communication rhetorically, focusing not only on their purpose in writing but also on the needs and expectations of their audience and considering the ethical dimensions and other relevant features of the writing context.
- Format basic workplace genres, including formal and informal reports, proposals, letters, memos, emails and may include resumes, instructions, technical descriptions or websites.
- Write and design effective print and online documents, using headings, lists, well-crafted paragraphs, and white space.
- Effectively use, design, and present figures and tables.
- Effectively use and correctly cite information from sources using a citation style appropriate to the course audience, APA 7th and/or IEEE style.
- Identify Indigenous terminology and Aboriginal Peoples terminology for Professional and Technical Communication
- Design effective PowerPoint, Google Slides or Canva Presentations
- Work effectively in assigned groups

Textbooks and Readings

Required: *There is no textbook to purchase for this course. Please follow the reading list on D2L. The following textbooks that will be used are free online:*

Last, S. (2019). *Technical writing essentials*. University of Victoria. Retrieved from

<https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/technicalwriting/#main>

McMurrey, D. (2017). *Online Technical Writing*. Retrieved from

<https://www.prismnet.com/~hcexres/textbook/acctoc.html>

Supplementary resources:

Gross, A., Hamelin, A., Merck, B., Rubio, C., Naas, J., Savage, M., & DeSilva, M. (n.d.). *Technical Writing*. Open Oregon Educational Resources.

<https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/technicalwriting/>

Lynch, P. J., & Horton, S. (2017). *Web Style Guide* (3rd edition). Retrieved from

<http://webstyleguide.com/index.html>

Murdoch University. (2019). *IEEE Style: Citing in the text. A guide to IEEE referencing*.

Retrieved from <https://libguides.murdoch.edu.au/IEEE/text>

North Carolina State University (NCSU). (2004). *LabWrite Resources*. Retrieved from

<https://labwrite.ncsu.edu/res/res-homepage.htm>

Purdue University. (2020). *APA Style (7th edition)*. Retrieved from

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html

Purdue University. (2020). *IEEE Overview*. Retrieved from

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/ieee_style/ieee_overview.html

Simon Fraser University Library. (2020). *General notes: APA (7th ed., 2020) citation guide*.

Retrieved from <https://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/cite-write/citation-style-guides/apa>

In addition to the required free textbook, weekly supplementary viewing and reading resources will be available online.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Students must have frequent, regular access to the Internet and email. A high-speed Internet connection is highly recommended. The course will be held online via the U of C's Desire2Learn (D2L) learning management system at <https://d2l.ucalgary.ca/>. I strongly recommend that you download a personal backup copy of this course outline and all online course materials (assignment descriptions and rubrics) in case you need them when Internet access is temporarily unavailable. A PDF reader is required. Technology to view and listen to videos and podcasts is required.

If you have technical difficulties, contact the university's IT department. For more information, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/student-campus-services-information-technologies-it.html>

Assignments and Evaluation

Course Assignment	Description of Assignment	Mark	Due Date
ASSIGNMENT 1 Introduction Post	Individual work Based on week one readings and model, this assignment is an introduction post that you will post to the D2L forum.	10%	May 13
ASSIGNMENT 2 Professional Resume	Individual work Refer to your readings list for guidance with formatting and editing. Correct formatting is important for business correspondence, especially resumes. This assignment will be a two page resume with various headings (objective or qualifications summary, experience, and education) and some additional choices of headings (activities, professional associations, seminars, conferences, etc.) following the exemplars and readings. On D2L, you will be guided on how to use MS Word, Google Docs or Canva to create your professional resume.	15%	May 20
ASSIGNMENT 3 Proposal for Group Project	Group work Several topics will be posted to D2L to choose from. The purpose of this assignment is practice moving with colleagues through developing a proposal that may be realistically implemented. In groups of 4 or 5, your proposal should 1) Clearly describe the project or research to be studied; 2) Make a case for why it is important or should be funded; 3) Explain your proposed research process and deliverables (i.e., final recommendation report and the Visual Presentation); and 4) Provide a timeline and hypothetical budget;	15%	May 27

<p>ASSIGNMENT 4 Midterm Exam</p>	<p>Individual work</p> <p>This is an open book midterm exam based on weeks 1 - 4 readings with timed response. Following the mid term guidelines on D2L, you will prepare a business correspondence document in a time limit of 3 hours.</p> <p>D2L will randomly assign you a business correspondence document to prepare when you open the task. You can complete this midterm at any time between May 28th and June 3rd, however, you only have 3 hours once you have opened this task to submit it for grading.</p> <p>Please ensure that you open up the task before 8pm on June 3rd to ensure you have 3 hours to complete it.</p> <p>Please ensure that you have 3 hours of time to work on this task before you open it.</p>	<p>15%</p>	<p>May 28 - June 3</p>
<p>ASSIGNMENT 5 Discussion Forum Participation</p>	<p>Individual work</p> <p>You will be required to participate by posting and responding in weekly D2L forums from weeks 1 through 4 on assigned topics, which may include revision exercises, document and/or visuals critiques, and responses to readings and viewings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 1-2 due on May 20 • Week 3-4 due on June 3 <p>Final grading of your 4 weekly contributions is on June 3rd, however, you are required to post each week on time by 11:59pm on the dates indicated. Post early in the week!</p>	<p>15%</p>	<p>June 3</p>
<p>ASSIGNMENT 6 Final Recommendation Report for Group Project</p>	<p>Group Work</p> <p>You will compose a formal recommendation report based on your proposed project; the report might typically might take the form of an evaluation report.</p> <p>The body of the report must be 2000-2200 words and include a minimum of one effectively formatted table or graph. It should include an <i>introduction, methods, findings, and</i></p>	<p>20%</p>	<p>June 10</p>

	<p><i>conclusions, and recommendations.</i></p> <p>In addition, the report will have the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • title page • executive summary • table of contents • list of figures and tables <p>A reference list (APA 7th and/or IEEE style) must be included. Appendices must be included if applicable.</p>		
<p>ASSIGNMENT 7 Visual Presentation for Group Project</p>	<p>Group Work</p> <p>This is a professional visual presentation based on the group project and the final recommendation report. All group members must have a role in creating this assignment using PowerPoint, Google Slides or Canva Presentation.</p>	10%	June 17

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: You must complete all assignments, or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor. If you miss a required course component, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

Submission of Assignments

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments and hand in your essays directly on D2L drop-boxes. All assignments will be returned on D2L with any applicable written feedback.

Private information related to individual students is treated with the utmost regard by University of Calgary faculty. Student assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty, and personal information is collected in accordance with the ***Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act***. Please note that instructors may use audio or video recorded for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

Note: It is your responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that you submit the proper version (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission).

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of 5% or a partial letter grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late. All assignments are due by 11:59pm on a given due date.

Student Accommodations

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS); SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For information on support services and accommodations for

students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/. Students who require an accommodation 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) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should provide supporting documentation to support their request; however, instructors may not require that a medical note be presented. For the policy on supporting documentation the use of a statutory declaration, see Section M.1 of the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>. Also see FAQs for Students: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

Expectations for Writing

Department policy directs that all written assignments and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses 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 and proper documentation of research sources. For further information, please refer to the *University of Calgary Calendar* section on writing across the curriculum: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

The following table outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. Final grades are reported as letter grades. For components graded using percentages or numerical scores, those values will be used directly in calculating the final course grade, while for components graded using letter grades, the letter grades will be converted to the midpoint values listed in the final column of the table below in calculating the final course grade.

In this course, *percentages will be used for all grades including tests and written assignments.*

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations*
4.00	Outstanding performance	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent performance	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70	Approaching excellent performance	A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30	Exceeding good performance	B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good performance	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70	Approaching good performance	B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance	C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory performance	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance	C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for	D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%

	subsequent courses in the same subject			
0.00	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	F	0 - 49.99%	0%

* Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

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. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

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.

For information on citation and documentation styles (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre resource links at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support> or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, please consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, 3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success?utm_source=ssc&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=redirect

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

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, including surveys, interviews, or observations as part of your university studies, you are responsible for obtaining research ethics approval and for following university research ethics guidelines. In some cases, your instructors may apply for course-based research ethics approval for certain assignments, and in those cases, they must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, please see <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/arts-researchers/resources-researchers-and-instructors/ethics>

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal

For university regulations and procedures related to deferrals of exams and course work, requests for reappraisals, and other matters, please see the relevant sections in the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html>

Student Support Services and Resources

Please visit <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources, Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and Safewalk.

For resources on D2L, visit <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students>. IT support is available at itsupport@ucalgary.ca or by calling 403-220.5555.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

Please refer to the assigned reading schedule on D2L.
All reading and viewing material is online for you to follow the links.