

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film
COMS 363 (L05): Professional and Technical Communication
SPRING 2021: May 5 to June 17, 2021 (excluding May 24)
Online Course (no lectures or labs)

Instructor:	Dr. Linda Vennard
Phone:	N/A
Email:	vennard@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	Tuesdays 10:00 – 12:00 or by appointment (virtual meetings via Zoom)

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 course is delivered entirely online, with no scheduled lectures.

Students are encouraged to attend the Instructor's scheduled weekly virtual office hours via Zoom to discuss any aspect of the course, such as readings and assignments.

The weekly schedule of Assigned Reading Chapters can be found at the end of this outline and on D2L. Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline. The course involves some group work.

The timeline for this course is shorter than Fall or Winter sessions and the pace is faster. Note that the first few weeks of the course are reading intensive so you can get a firm grasp of the content and apply it to course projects.

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 and produce basic workplace document genres, including formal and informal reports, proposals, letters, memos, emails, résumés, instructions, technical descriptions and, optionally, 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.
- Conduct secondary research (locating relevant sources using the U of C library search tools online).
- Effectively use and correctly cite information from sources using a citation style appropriate to the course audience, ideally APA and/or IEEE style. • edit documents to eliminate common writing errors.
- Work effectively in a small group.

Textbooks and Readings

Required Textbook:

Meyer, C. (2020). *Communicating for Results*. 5th edition. Don Mills: Oxford University Press. Both print and digital formats are available through the University of Calgary Bookstore.

Additional Online References

American Psychological Association. (2020). Style and grammar guidelines. APA Style. <https://apastyle.apa.org>

Last, S. (2019). Technical writing essentials. Victoria BC: University of Victoria. Retrieved from <https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/technicalwriting/#main>

Learning Technologies and Requirements & Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices

This is an online course, offered entirely asynchronously and to be completed on your own time. In order to complete online (or blended) courses, University of Calgary students are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security and malware updates, with current antivirus software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection, and a current and updated web browser;
- A webcam (built-in or external);
- A microphone and speaker (built-in or external), or headset with microphone.

Most current laptops will have a built-in webcam, speaker and microphone. If you need access to other software programs to complete assignments, your instructor will provide relevant information and links.

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>

Instructors may arrange to record synchronous zoom class sessions for lesson capture; however, students are not to share recordings with others. Please carefully review the section on Instructor Copyright at the end of this outline.

Email Policy

To help support the timely response of course-related email, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Email to the Instructor should include COMS 363 in the subject line, and include your name as it appears in D2L
- Email should be used for short inquiries specific to you and/or your group. Whenever possible Students are asked to post questions to D2L Discussions so others may view and benefit from your questions and comments, and the Instructor's responses.
- By default D2L uses the email address associated with your UofC ID. I strongly recommend you use your UofC email address for this course.
- Students are responsible for ensuring they receive course email notifications and messages from the Instructor (which will be done through D2L), as well as messages and notifications from colleagues (expected to be done through D2L).
- I strongly recommend you send an email to yourself through D2L to make sure there are no issues you need to deal with prior to the commencement of the course.
- The Instructor will make every effort to respond to emails in a timely fashion, usually within 24 hours. Weekends may take longer.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
15 %	<p>Weekly Writing Assignments (Individual), five (5) worth 3% each:</p> <p>The Weekly Writing Assignments are designed for students to develop and demonstrate written mastery of the concepts in the corresponding assigned book chapters for the week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Weekly Writing Assignment contains two (2) to five (5) exercises, with each exercise requiring a written response from a few sentences to maximum 1 page in length. • Six (6) Weekly Writing Assignments are provided, but students are required to submit only five (5). • Assignments will be available on D2L from 8:00 a.m. on Saturdays and are due the next Friday at 11:59 p.m. • No late submissions of the Weekly Writing Assignments will be accepted. <p>Full details are provided on D2L.</p>	11:59 pm each Friday
15 %	<p>Resume and Cover Letter (Individual):</p> <p>A Resume is an important element of the business world and introduces you professionally, along with your education, experience and qualifications for a position. You can expect to prepare several in your career.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will prepare their own Resume (3-5 pages), plus a Cover Letter (1 page), and a short (maximum 1 page) critique of their online presence. 	May 21 11:59 pm

	Full details are provided on D2L.	
20 %	<p>Midterm Test (Individual):</p> <p>The Midterm is administered online through D2L. The Midterm Test:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is open book • covers chapters 1-10 inclusive, and chapters 12 and 13. • contains 50 multiple choice questions and five (5) short answer written questions (1-4 sentences each). • will be opened 2 days in advance (i.e. at 8:00 am on May 26) and will close one day after the due date (i.e. at 11:59 pm May 29) • is timed, and once opened must be completed. Students will have 2.5 hours to complete the Midterm Test. • Please allow yourself distraction free time to complete the Midterm. If unforeseen circumstances arise after you have started the Test which impact your ability to complete it within the specified time, please contact the Instructor as soon as possible to arrange for an alternate time to write the Test. • On each day the Midterm Test is available I will closely monitor my email between 9:00 am and noon, and 2:00 -4:00 pm to answer questions about the test, so you may wish to schedule your writing to overlap with those times. Students choosing to write in the evening are encouraged to notify me and I will monitor my email then as well. <p>Full details are provided on D2L.</p>	May 28 (opens at 8:00 am May 26, closes at 11:59 pm May 29)
10 %	<p>Informal Report (Individual):</p> <p>An Informal Report is a common requirement in business and academic environments, as well as a number of other contexts such as sports, nonprofit and social organizations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will identify a topic and context of interest to them and prepare an Informal Report in the form and based on material in Chapter 11 (Informal Reports). • The Informal Report is to be three (3) to five (5) pages in length and contain a minimum of two (2) visuals. • Minimal, if any, research is required and no research with people is permitted. <p>Full details are provided on D2L.</p>	June 4 11:59 pm
Group Project (total 40 %)		
10 %	<p>Formal Proposal (Group Project): Students will work in self-selected groups of 2-4 to produce a Formal Recommendation Report (see below). A Formal Proposal is the first step in the process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Group will prepare a Formal Proposal three (3) to four (4) pages in length in the form and based on material in Chapter 12 (Proposals and Formal Reports). • The Proposal will outline the Group's objectives for their Formal Recommendation Report, and their work plan including a table outlining the key responsibility of each team member and any associated deadlines. 	May 28 11:59 pm

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary research is required to complete both the Proposal and Formal Recommendation Report. No research with people is permitted. • Groups will be formed by the end of the second week, i.e. May 14 <p>Full details of the Group Project are provided on D2L.</p>	
30 %	<p>Formal Recommendation Report (Group Project): As outlined above, Students will work in groups of 2-4 to produce a Formal Recommendation Report based on their Proposal and in the form and style set out in Chapter 12 (Proposals and Formal Reports).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The body of the Formal Recommendation Report will be 12-15 pages in length, plus the 'Front Matter' and 'Back Matter' described in Chapter 12. • Will require secondary research. No research with people is permitted. <p>Full details of the Group Project are provided on D2L.</p>	June 17 11:59 pm

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: You do not have to complete all the assignments and exams in order to receive a passing grade in this course.

If you miss a required course component, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

Submission of Assignments

Please submit all assignments electronically by uploading them to the designated D2L dropbox (unless instructed otherwise in the assignment guidelines). Include your name and ID number on all assignments. 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).

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.

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. No late submissions of the Weekly Writing Assignments will be accepted.

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, percentage grades will be used for all 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 subsequent courses in the same subject	D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
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://success.ucalgary.ca/home.htm>

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 Readings and Assignment Due Dates

Week	Assigned Reading Chapters	Assignments	Due Dates
1	May 5 - 7 Assigned Reading Chapters: 1: Issues and Trends in Professional Communication 2: Getting the Message Across 7: Routine and Goodwill Messages	*Weekly Writing Assignment #1 (3%)	May 7 at 11:59 pm
2	May 10 - 14 Assigned Reading Chapters: 3: Getting Started: Planning, Writing and Revising Business Messages 4: Business Style: Word Choice, Conciseness and Tone 5: Business Style: Sentences and Paragraphs 6: Memorandums, E-mail and Routine Messages	*Weekly Writing Assignment #2 (3%) Groups formed for Group Project	May 14 at 11:59 pm

3	<p>May 17 - 21</p> <p>Assigned Reading Chapters:</p> <p>8: Delivering Unfavorable News 9: Persuasive Messages 10: Communicating for Employment</p>	<p>*Weekly Writing Assignment #3 (3%)</p> <p><i>Resume Project</i> (15%) due</p>	<p>May 21 at 11:59 pm</p> <p>May 21 at 11:59 pm</p>
4	<p>May 25 - 28</p> <p>Assigned Reading Chapters:</p> <p>12: Proposals and Formal Reports 13: Oral Communication</p>	<p>*Weekly Writing Assignment #4 (3%)</p> <p><i>Formal Proposal</i> (for Group Project) (10%) due</p> <p>*Midterm Test (20%) covers Chapters 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,12,13 * timed for 2.5 hours to complete; once opened must be completed;</p>	<p>May 28 at 11:59 pm</p> <p>May 28 at 11:59 pm</p> <p>Friday May 28 (*opens 8:00 am May 26 closes 11:59 pm May 29)</p>
5	<p>May 31 – June 4</p> <p>Assigned Reading Chapters:</p> <p>11: Informal Reports 14: Social Media and Mobile Communications</p>	<p>*Weekly Writing Assignment #5 (3%)</p> <p><i>Informal Report</i> (10%) due</p>	<p>June 4 at 11:59 pm</p> <p>June 4 at 11:59 pm</p>
6	<p>June 7 – 11</p> <p>No Assigned Readings</p>	<p>*Weekly Writing Assignment #6 (3%)</p>	<p>June 11 at 11:59 pm</p>
7	<p>June 14-17</p> <p>Course ends Thursday, June 17, 2021</p>	<p><i>Formal Recommendation Report</i> (Group Project) (30%) due</p>	<p>Thursday, June 17 at 11:59 pm</p>

- * Students are required to do only 5 of the 6 Weekly Writing Assignments.