

**Communications Studies (COMS) 363 – Lecture 61**  
**Professional and Technical Communication**  
**Summer 2011**  
**MW 18:30-19:30 SA 145; Lab: MW 19:45-21:15 SS 020**

**Instructor:** Shane Halasz  
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**Web Page:** Blackboard  
**Office Hours:** By appointment

### **Course Description**

This class takes a rhetorical approach to understanding professional and technical communication. Emphasis is placed on how workplace communication is situated within distinct organizational or corporate cultures as well as broader socio-cultural contexts. Students will gain knowledge and skills in writing across genres and disciplines through inquiry-based learning strategies and collaborative research projects. This theory-driven class will teach students open-ended skills that can be applied to a variety of workplace situations.

### **Objectives of the Course**

By the end of the course students will learn how to:

- Think critically and read critically
- Adapt to a given communication situation based on rhetorical analysis of audience, context, and purpose
- Communicate more effectively, both through oral presentations and written documents
- Research complex problems and situations individually and collaboratively
- Conceptualize and operationalize primary research
- Refine composition, revision, and editing skills, including organization, document design, peer review, style, grammar, and diction

### **Internet and Electronic Communication Device Information**

Laptop computers may be used in lecture for the sole purpose of taking notes. Unacceptable use of laptops includes working on assignments for other courses, surfing the Internet, checking email, playing games, watching video, chatting, etc. Under no circumstances should a student use their laptop during a student presentation. If the instructor or any student should notice improper use of this device, privileges will be removed for the rest of the term.

Cell phones and all other forms of electronic communication must be turned off and put away during class. Violation of this policy may result in students being asked to leave the classroom. If you have an emergency situation in life that requires your phone be turned on, inform the instructor of this situation and sit at the back, near the door so you can get out quickly to take care of your emergency should the need arise.

Unless otherwise specified, lab time will be free for students to use in any way that they see fit. Therefore, the above regulations are significantly more relaxed in lab.

### **Textbooks and Readings:**

Graves, H. & Graves, R. (2007). *A strategic guide to technical communication*. Peterborough: Broadview Press.

### **Assignments and Evaluation**

1. *Oral Presentation on Writing/Grammar (5%)* Scheduled throughout semester – sign-up to occur in first class
2. *Summaries of Peer Reviewed Journal Article for Technical Reader (Memo 12.5%) and General Reader (Newsletter Article 12.5%)* Due July 11, 2011
3. *Group Proposal and Work Plan (10%)* Due July 25, 2011
4. *Individual Literature Review (20%)* Due August 8, 2011
5. *Oral Presentations on Group Project Findings (10%)* Due August 17, 2011
6. *Group Recommendations Report (30%)* Due August 17, 2011

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

Note: Please hand in your essays directly to your tutor or 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.

### **Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: NO**

Please note: If your class is held in the evening, the Registrar's Office will make every attempt to schedule the final exam during the evening; however, there is NO guarantee that the exam will NOT be scheduled during the day.

### **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.

## 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://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: [www.efwr.ucalgary.ca](http://www.efwr.ucalgary.ca)

## Grading System

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture:

(Revised, effective September 2008)

	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 (MacEwan Student Centre 4<sup>th</sup> floor, [efwr.ucalgary.ca](http://efwr.ucalgary.ca)) 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 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**

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.su.ucalgary.ca/services/student-services/student-rights.html>

## **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/cfreb>

## **Schedule of Lectures and Readings**

To be handed out in the first class.