

**University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film**

COMS 363 (L05): Professional and Technical Communication

Summer 2020: June 29 – August 12, 2020 (excluding July 01 and August 03)

Last day to drop without financial penalty: July 3, 2020

Last day to withdraw: August 12, 2020

Lectures: Posted every Monday

Instructor:	Lexie Angelo
Office:	N/A
Office Phone:	N/A
Email:	lexie.angelo1@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours:	By appointment on Zoom (Friday's preferred)

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

The course is delivered entirely online.

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found at the end of this outline or on D2L. Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline. The course involves some group work. To do well in this course, schedule at least 12 hours a week to complete readings, post on discussions boards, do group meetings, and work on assignments.

Objectives of the Course

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

- Approach workplace communication rhetorically, focusing on writing while considering the needs and expectations of the audience. Student will consider the ethical dimensions and other relevant features of the writing context.
- Format basic workplace communications materials including formal and informal reports, proposals, letters, memos, emails, and, optionally, résumés, instructions, technical descriptions, and websites.
- Write and design effective print and online documents using headings, lists, well-crafted paragraphs, figures, tables, and white space, as appropriate.

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- Conduct secondary research (locating relevant sources using the U of C library search tools online). Depending on the focus of the recommendation report assignment, students may also be expected to know how to construct and interpret and present results from a simple empirical study (e.g., a small-scale usability study involving testing, interviews, or surveys).
- Effectively use and correctly cite information from sources using a citation style appropriate to the course audience, ideally APA style.
- Ideally, students who complete COMS 363 will also have engaged in critically evaluating professional and technical writing and will know how to:
 - design effective PowerPoint slides (and, for in-person classes, how to effectively craft and present an oral presentation).
 - work effectively and cooperatively in groups.

Textbooks and Readings

Ewald, T. (2017). *Writing in the Technical Fields: A Practical Guide*. 2nd edition. Oxford University Press.

Recommended

eBook: <https://calgary-store.vitalsource.com/products/writing-in-the-technical-fields-thorsten-ewald-v9780199021505?term=9780199021505>

Physical book: Copies are available at the University of Calgary Bookstore.

Additional Online Resources

OWL Purdue APA guide:

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

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Style and grammar guidelines*. APA Style.

<https://apastyle.apa.org>

Policy on the use of Electronic Communication Devices

Students must have regular access to a computer with a reliable internet connection. Please ensure browsers are up-to-date (Firefox, Chrome or Safari). During the first week of the course, please:

- Check your computer compatibility in D2L. My Tools > System Check
- Send an email to yourself from within D2L to ensure that emails from D2L are not being directed to a spam folder.
- Configure your message notifications to specify what course news items you would like sent to your SMS (message feed) or email.

For online help, see <https://ucalgary.service-now.com/it/>

Assignments and Evaluation

Please see detailed descriptions at the end of this outline.

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
10 %	Introduction and Personal Bio	July 3
15 %	Resume and Cover Letter	July 10
20 %	Quizzes (2)	July 17 July 31
15 %	Proposal (Group Project)	July 24
20 %	Formal Report (Group Project)	Aug 7
10 %	Presentation (Group Project)	Aug 12
10 %	Discussion Forum (Participation)	July 24 Aug 12

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: You must complete all individual assignments and all group assignments in order to pass this course. If you miss a required course component, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

Submission of Assignments

Group Assignments:

Students have group assignments as part of the course. Group assignments should only include the names of members who contributed to the work. If a student did not contribute to the project, including their name is a form of plagiarism. Normally, all members of a group will earn the same grade for group assignments, but the instructor may adjust individual group members' grades based on formal or informal peer evaluations. The instructor may administer peer evaluations to any group; peer evaluations will also be administered to any group if any member of that group so requests. (The names of group members requesting peer evaluations will be kept confidential.)

Submission of Assignments:

Submit Word (.docx), PDF or PowerPoint (.pptx) formats for assignments.

Please include your name, or group names, on all assignments.

Please submit all written assignments to the designated D2L drop box. Only one person should submit group assignments to the group drop boxes. Marked assignments submitted to a group dropbox will be accessible for review by all group members.

If you encounter difficulty submitting through D2L, please email the assignment to the instructor with "COMS 363 Temporary Submission" in the subject line. As soon as D2L becomes available, resubmit the assignment in the designated drop box and leave a note in the comment box, indicating that you've submitted earlier by email to avoid late penalties.

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).

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 full day (24 hours) late.

Assignment length requirements:

Assignments 20% over or under the stated maximum and minimum word counts will be subject to a one-level grade penalty (e.g., from B to B-).

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 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. In this course, all work except for online quizzes will be graded using letter grades. Online quizzes will be graded using percentage grades.

Final grades are reported as letter grades. For components graded using percentages, 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.

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://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

The course-based research ethics approval in place for COMS 363 covers only research (e.g., surveys) involving your fellow students in this section of the course. If you propose to do other research involving other 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

Week	Date	Lecture, Readings and Tasks	Assignments Due
1	June 29	Chapters 1, 2 Topics: Attributes of Technical Writing, Audience and Tone Mechanics: Active/Passive Voice	ASSIGNMENT 1 Personal Bio Due: July 3
2	July 6	Chapters 3, 4, 5, 11 Topics: Technical Paragraphs, Job Applications, Letters and Transitions Mechanics: Parallel Structure, Lists	ASSIGNMENT 2 Resume and Cover Letter Due: July 10
3	July 13	Chapter 8 Topic: Intercultural Communications, Collaborative Writing, Team Charters Mechanics: Commas, Quotation Marks	QUIZ 1 (Week 1, 2 and 3 material) Due: July 17
4	July 20	Chapter 10, 6 Topic: Graphics, Surveys and Heuristics, Proposals Mechanics: Pronouns	ASSIGNMENT 3 Proposal Due: July 24
5	July 27	Chapter 7, 9, 12 Topics: Formal Reports, Citations, Definitions Mechanics: Colons, Semicolons	QUIZ 2 (Week 4 and 5 material) Due: July 31
6	Aug 4	Chapter 13 Topics: Instructions, Procedures and Manuals Mechanics: Apostrophes	ASSIGNMENT 4 Formal Report Due: August 7
7	Aug 10	Chapter 14 Topic: Oral Presentations	ASSIGNMENT 5 Presentation Due: August 12

*All due dates are at 11:59 PM

Assignment Descriptions

Assignment	Description	Weight	Due Date*
ASSIGNMENT 1 Personal Bio	Based on week 1 readings. This assignment is an introduction that you will submit, which will also be a component of Assignment 3 – Proposal. Assignment instructions are posted on D2L.	10%	July 3
ASSIGNMENT 2 Resume and Cover Letter	You will prepare a resume and cover letter totaling 3 pages. A resume is an important element of business correspondence. It includes various headings such as education, work experience, volunteer, and skills. Refer to the assignment instructions and readings to complete this assignment.	15%	July 10
ASSIGNMENT 3 Proposal	Group work Teams will select a client brief from D2L and create a proposal. The purpose of the assignment is to create a formal and persuasive document tailored to a target audience. It is 3-4 pages in length and is the first part of your group project. Full assignment instructions are posted on D2L.	15%	July 24
QUIZZES (2)	Two open book quizzes are based on readings from weeks 1-4. The quizzes are timed and include multiple choice as well as written responses. Students will have 90 minutes to complete each quiz. Quizzes will open three days in advance, and once opened, must be completed. Please allow for distraction-free time to write each quiz.	20%	Week 1 and 2 material - July 17 Week 3 and 4 material - July 31
ASSIGNMENT 4 Formal Report	Group work In this assignment, groups will undertake the client work they prepared in their proposal. The body of the report must be between 2000 – 2200 words and include at least and one formatted table or graph. It should include an <i>introduction, methods, findings, conclusion and recommendation</i> . The report will also have: a title page, executive summary, table of contents, list of figures and tables, a reference list and appendix. Full assignment instructions and resources are posted on D2L.	20%	August 7

ASSIGNMENT 5 Presentation	Based on your report, you will create a presentation to deliver to your client which outlines your proposal and final report. All group members must have a role in creating and delivering the presentation.	10%	August 12
ASSIGNMENT 6 Discussion and Participation Tasks	There will be discussion board tasks, surveys or group post requirements. These will be graded on Week 3 and Week 7. The tasks will be posted in the lecture each week.	10%	Grades returned on July 24 and Aug 12

*All due dates are at 11:59 PM