

**Communications Studies (COMS) 363 - Lecture 03
Professional and Technical Communication
Winter 2012**

**Wednesdays, 6:30 - 7:45 pm, Room MS 205
8:00 - 9:20 pm, Room SS 018/020**

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Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the fundamental practices of organizational communication. Students will learn basic rhetorical techniques and apply them to produce clear, concise, well-presented information that addresses the informational needs of their intended audience. Students will learn software techniques to enhance their productivity, and engage with social media to explore its professional uses. Students will acquire a basic understanding of the role of communication professionals and when it is appropriate to seek their assistance.

Additional Information

The internet and, increasingly, social media are part of the everyday landscape in organizational as well as personal life, often blurring the distinction between the two, as well as our public and private selves. Since social media are an everyday reality for most of us, I will occasionally ask that you participate in activities that require its use. Since social media evolves at a rapid pace, learning about its various uses and applications is an ongoing process. Indeed, social media is itself a highly specialized branch of professional communication.

The use of social media in the classroom is an experimental approach, one that I hope will engage us as learners and collaborators. As an emergent field, I am familiar with social media only as a "user" and not an expert, and I envision that over the term, classroom participation will involve sharing our experiences with social media in our everyday (but not personal!) lives, and collaborating on effective strategies for using it in a professional capacity. We will explore using facebook, twitter, LinkedIn, youtube, blogging and other mediums to increase your social capital and expand your professional network.

Privacy and security are always issues in any digital medium, and I respect that some of you may not wish to participate in activities that require the use of social media. While I anticipate that most of you, like me, see the potential for social media to make lab activities relevant, engaging and fun, if this is the case for you, please feel welcome to approach me (in class, in person during class time, via e-mail or phone). I will be happy to assign an alternative lesson, and your class participation mark will not be affected (assuming you contribute in other capacities).

Objectives of the Course

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

- Explain what technical writing is, and the importance of good communication skills in the workplace
- Produce clear, concise writing your intended audience can understand
- Produce writing that adheres to professional ethical standards
- Design visually effective documents and technical illustrations
- Compose common types of e-mail and print correspondence
- Develop a technical report
- Prepare proposals and progress reports
- Write instructions, procedures and policies
- Deliver a presentation
- Write an effective résumé
- Determine when it is appropriate to work with communication professionals, and feel comfortable working with them

Internet and electronic communication device information

Please refrain from using cell phones and other hand-held communication devices and ensure they are set to silent or turned off during classes and labs. Please refrain from using social media during classes and labs unless instructed to do so. The use of electronic devices such as laptops and tablets to take notes or to advance your understanding of the course material is acceptable.

Textbooks and Readings:

Tebeaux, E. & Dragga, S. (2010). *The Essentials of Technical Communication*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Supplemental student resources located at www.oup.com/us/tebeaux.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment 1	5%
Assignment 2	10%
Assignment 3	20%

Assignment 4 (group project; 10% presentation, 20% content)	30%
Online quizzes (12 @ 2% each, min. 10)	20%
Presentation evaluations	5%
Class participation	10%
Total	100%

Detailed instructions will be provided in lectures and labs, and posted online. It is your responsibility to ensure you understand the instructions. If at any time you are unclear about the instructions, please feel welcome to approach me.

Assignments 1 and 2 are to be completed during lab time and submitted at the end of class.

Assignment 1: Congratulations! You've just received a promotion within your organization. The publishers of your company's newsletter have asked you to submit a photo and a brief biography (250-300 words).

Assignment 2: Oh dear. You've been dealing with an organization, and their product or service is downright shoddy. Write a complaint letter describing the problem, how it affected you and/or your organization, and the follow-up action you expect the organization to take (500-750 words).

Assignment 3: Your client has asked you to prepare a pricing proposal for a product or service. Develop a 750-1000 word proposal on a product or service of your choice that includes a minimum of one table, one chart or graph (drawing on numerical data), and one other visual element. We will begin working on this project in class the week prior to the deadline. Please e-mail your proposed product or service to me during the lab at the latest. If the product or service is appropriate and viable for this assignment, I will approve it via e-mail.

Assignment 4 (groups of 4 or 5): You will develop a 2750-3000 word technical report including a letter of transmittal, executive summary, and recommendations. We will be forming groups on January 18, and on January 25, you and the members of your group will e-mail your topic to me. If the topic is appropriate and viable for this assignment, I will approve it via e-mail. All group members will receive the same grade. Your presentation should be approximately 20 minutes long. Your presentation comprises 10% of the grade, and the content of your report comprises the remaining 20%.

Quizzes are located online at www.oup.com/us/tebeaux. Navigate to the relevant chapter heading and select self-quiz. Use the form located at the top of the page to e-mail your quiz to me by 6:00 pm on the Monday preceding class at cmshells@ucalgary.ca. Quizzes are worth 2% each and account for 20% of your mark. Each quiz contains ten multiple choice questions pertaining to the assigned reading. You are required to complete a **minimum of ten** out of the twelve quizzes. If you submit all twelve, I will disregard your two lowest marks to calculate your grade. If you submit fewer than **ten quizzes**, you will **not** receive credit for any of the quizzes.

Presentation evaluations are worth 5%. You are required to submit a small amount of feedback (minimum of two sentences; point form is acceptable) during **four of the five presentation sessions to achieve this grade** (depending on the number of groups, the schedule may be subject to revision). If you submit feedback for fewer than four of the presentation sessions, you will **not** receive credit for any of the evaluations. Feedback is for my use only and will not be shared with presenters.

The following table details the deadlines for assignments:

Due Date	Assignment	Weight
Monday, January 16, 6:00 pm	Quiz 1	2%
Wednesday, January 18	Assignment 1: Bio (in class)	5%
Monday, January 23, 6:00 pm	Quiz 2	2%
Monday, January 30, 6:00 pm	Quiz 3	2%
Monday, February 6, 6:00 pm	Quiz 4	2%
Wednesday, February 8	Assignment 2: Letter (in class)	10%
Monday, February 13, 6:00 pm	Quiz 5	2%
Monday, February 27, 6:00 pm	Quiz 6	2%
Wednesday, February 29	Assignment 3: Illustrated proposal	20%
Monday, March 5, 6:00 pm	Quiz 7	2%
Wednesday, March 7	Group presentations (evaluations)	
Monday, March 12, 6:00 pm	Quiz 8	2%
Wednesday, March 14	Group presentations (evaluations)	
Monday, March 19, 6:00 pm	Quiz 9	2%
Wednesday, March 21	Group presentations (evaluations)	
Monday, March 26, 6:00 pm	Quiz 10	2%
Wednesday, March 28 in-class	Assignment 4: group projects Group presentations (evaluations)	30%
Monday, April 2, 6:00 pm	Quiz 11	2%
Wednesday, April 4	Group presentations (evaluations)	
Monday, April 9, 6:00 pm	Quiz 12	2%

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

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.

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 4th floor, 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/cfreh>

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

All readings are found in the assigned textbook and its accompanying online resources. It is also expected that students will review the online supplemental materials associated with each chapter, located at www.oup.com/us/tebeaux.

Wednesdays, 2012	Reading	Lecture	Notes
January 11		Introduction to the course	
January 18	Chapter 1	Writing in the workplace	Form groups Assignment 1 due
January 25	Chapter 2	Understanding your audience	Submit proposed topic for group project
February 1	Chapter 3	Ethical writing	
February 8	Chapter 4	Style	Assignment 2 due
February 15	Chapter 5	Document design	
February 22	READING WEEK – NO CLASSES		
February 29	Chapter 6	Illustrations	Assignment 3 due
March 7	Chapter 7	Correspondence	Group presentations
March 14	Chapter 8	Reports	Group presentations
March 21	Chapter 9	Proposals and progress reports	Group presentations
March 28	Chapter 10	Instructions, procedures, policies	Assignment 4 due Group presentations
April 4	Chapter 11	Delivering a presentation	Group presentations
April 11	Chapter 12	Finding work	Group presentations