

University of Calgary
Department of Communication and Culture
Communications Studies COMS 363 L03
Professional and Technical Communication
Winter Term 2013
Wednesday's 18:30-21:20
January 9 to 10 April 2013
Reading Week 17-24 February – no classes

Instructor: Jeremy Hexham
Location of class: MS 205
Office: SS 1310
Office Phone: 587-287-1309 – leave a message
E-Mail: jhexham@ucalgary.ca – see email policy below
Office Hours: Wed. 5:30-6:15 pm or by appointment

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to practical organizational communications. It deals with the type of issues you will encounter in work situations. Students will learn the basic skills needed to communicate with people within and without business, government, and non-profit organizations.

The aim is to enable you to produce clear, concise, and well-presented information that addresses the needs of your intended audience. Apart from practical matters like the use of electronic communications, including social media, we will look at some communications theories such as key ideas in traditional and modern rhetoric to help you understand the need to convince and motivate people as well as providing them with “the facts.”

Since the situations you are likely to find yourself in will change over your career, and between different employers, this course does not provide you with set texts and blueprints. Instead it aims to help you develop the skills you need to communicate efficiently. It also recognizes that in business one often has to interact with different levels of government. Therefore, an important component of the course deals with the trials and tribulations of communicating with local, provincial, and federal, officials as well as various branches of the media.

Objectives of the Course

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

- Think and communicate critically
- Develop good communication skills in the workplace
- Produce clear, concise writing that your intended audience understands
- Know how to communicate with government, media, cross-cultural groups, businesses, and non-profit organizations
- Use the internet and social media effectively
- Make presentations with and without aids such as Power Point
- Produce writings and presentations that adhere to professional ethical standards
- Compose common types of e-mail and print correspondence
- Write a technical report
- Prepare proposals and progress reports for business projects and grant applications

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- Prepare individual and collaborative research reports, drafts, document reviews, make revisions, and develop presentation skills

Internet and electronic communication device information

- Cell phones must be put away at the start of class: there will be no texting, twittering, the use of facebook, emailing, etc. during this class. If any of these activities persists, students may be asked to leave the class.
- Laptop computers may be used only to take notes during class. Please do not use your laptop to view non-class related content or to do work unrelated to this class. Under no circumstances should a student use their laptop during a student presentation. Those who do not adhere to this rule will lose the right to use a laptop.
- **Recording of lectures:** Recording any part of any lecture in any form, including through a computer, without permission is not permitted. Nor will the Power Point slides or lecture notes be posted on the web. The photographing of Power Point lectures with a cell phone or other device is not permitted. These restrictions are due to copyright and intellectual property issues and are strictly enforced.

E-mail Policy

- When sending me an email make sure that you have COMS 363.L03 in the subject line
- Please ensure that your name is visible in the “from line.” This way I can identify you and not play email tag.
- Before this course begins please go to the blackboard site and send an email to yourself. If you do not receive the email it is your responsibility to update your email address in the University of Calgary system. Instructions on how to do this are provided on the E- learn page. If you neglect to update your email address in the system, you will miss important messages related to the course.

Textbooks and Readings:

- Gowers, Ernest, Sidney, Greenbaum and Janet Whitcut. (2004). *The Complete Plain Words*. London: H.M.S.O.
- 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 – Biography and Picture	5%	6 pm Monday January 14, 2013
Assignment 2 – Online “slidware” résumé	5%	6 pm Monday January 28, 2013
Assignment 3 – Oral Presentations	10%	Ongoing January 23 – March 27, 2013
Assignment 4 – SU Election Issue Report	20%	6:30 pm Wednesday March 13, 2013
Assignment 5 – Group Project	30%	Wednesday March 27, 2013
Online Quizzes	20%	See Quiz section
Class participation	10%	Ongoing
Total	100%	

Assignment 1: Biography and Picture

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

- Your photograph is to be included in your document. It can be in the top right or Left-hand corner and should be no more than one third of the page
- The assignment should be entitled [Last Name]_[First Name]-Bio and is to be emailed to jhexham@ucalgary.ca by 9:30 pm on Sunday January 13, 2013
- Your photograph is to be sent as an attachment to the documents with your name somewhere on the photograph, large enough so that it can be read easily.

Assignment 2: Online “slidware” résumé

According to an August 3, 2007 article in the Globe and Mail many business schools are requiring students to include “slidware” presentation with their application. With that in mind for your second assignment you are required to submit a resume using the online presentation software Prezi.

- When using this software make sure you sign up with your name@ucalgary.ca email address so that you can keep your presentations private. If you do not sign up with your ucalgary.ca email address your presentations will be available to the world.
- You will need to email me jhexham@ucalgary.ca the link to your presentation by 6 PM on Monday, January 28, 2013

Assignment 3: Oral Presentations

From time to time you may have to speak out in support or to oppose an organizational decision and in some cases you may feel very strongly about it. For this assignment you will be given a topic and will have two weeks to research and prepare a 7 to 10 minutes oral presentation stating your position.

- For this presentation you will be permitted one page of notes and may not use PowerPoint or any other type of “slidware” program.
- Your classmates will provide written comments about your presentation

Assignment 4: SU Election Issue Report

February 25 till March 7 is the annual University of Calgary Student Union Elections. For this assignment you need to identify and research one issue that relates to your program of study, or as a student you feel is important and needs to be addressed. For example tuition fees, secondary suites, transit, parking on campus, food choices on campus, lack of study space, etc. Then identify two candidates and write a 750 -1000 word report saying why one of them deserves to win the election while the other does not. This will be done through examining the way they present their ideas through posters, online presentations, debates, etc.

- You need to email me jhexham@ucalgary.ca your candidates and issues by 9 AM on Thursday, February 28.
- No changes in issues and candidates will be allowed after 5 PM on Thursday, March 7
- This assignment is to be handed in at the beginning of class on Wednesday, March 13, 2013

Assignment 5: Group Project

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For this assignment you will work in groups all of 4-5 people. Each group needs to identify a small to medium non-profit organization and write a 2500 to 3000 technical report about the organization's website. The report needs to include a letter transmittal, executive summary, and recommendations about how the website can be improved. You need to include at least two images. As part of your research you need identify 2 to 3 similar organizations and point out up to 10 things that make those websites better than the one belonging to the website you are critiquing.

- We will be forming groups on January 16
- You will need to email the website you're looking at by January 30, along with a group contract explaining what each group member will be doing.
- Each group member will be will evaluate their fellow members and will need to identify each person did in the group as part of the group final grade.
 - Note that if a group member's name appears in assignment but that group member did not contribute to the document here they are guilty of plagiarism.
- Each group will make a Power Point presentation of approximately 20 minutes. The presentations will take place on April 3rd and 10th.
 - The presentations are worth 10% of the grade and the content of the report is worth 20%.
- This assignment is to be handed in at the beginner class on Wednesday, March 27, 2013
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Online Quizzes

There are 12 quizzes located online at <http://www.oup.com/us/tebeaux>. Navigate to the relevant chapter heading and select self-quiz.

- 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
- Quizzes need to be completed and submitted by 6:00 pm on the Monday preceding class to jhexham@ucalgary.ca

Participation

This course is designed to reinforce student learning and mastery of the material through active engagement and "doing". Students can expect activities each class. Students are expected to attend class and participate. Participation is not just attending per se but to contribute to each other's learning and participating in the creation of a positive atmosphere and learning environment

Registering scheduled final examination: No

Due dates, late policy, return of assignments, & grade appeals:

- Late assignments will be docked one letter grade level (e.g., from B to B-) for each day the assignment is late. For example, an assignment due Wednesday but submitted the following Tuesday would have a four-level grade deduction for late submission. Assignments submitted late may or may not receive detailed comments, and may or may not be returned as promptly as assignments submitted on time.

A note on word count:

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A workplace supervisor who asks for a two-page memo either will not read a four-page response, or will not be in the best frame of mind when doing so. However, if it leaks a little onto the third page, and has enough real meat to make it worth reading, few supervisors will complain. With this in mind, then:

- All assignments should stick as closely as possible to the assigned length. A truly excellent assignment nails the question exactly and is the suggested length.
- However, there is a 10% grace in length. Therefore a 500-word assignment would not be actively penalized until it reached 550 words. Over 550 words, no assignment, however brilliant otherwise, would receive a clear A.
- Note that the report assignment specifically allows for more than the suggested page length if it contains bulky visuals. Otherwise the same rules apply to pages as well as number of words.
- Don't try to keep down to the required length by using narrow margins and teeny font.

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: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

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

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 (3rd Floor Taylor Family Digital Library, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>) 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.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

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

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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/cfre>