University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

COMS 363 (L02): Professional and Technical Communication

Winter 2022: January 10 to April 12 (excluding Feb. 20-26)

Web-Based (no lectures or labs)

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR IN-PERSON COURSE DELIVERY

Asynchronous & Synchronous Course Components: Please read this outline carefully to see which course components will be offered synchronously (where you are expected to participate in person or online at the usual scheduled course time) and which components will be offered asynchronously (to be completed on your own time). Synchronous sessions hosted on Zoom can be accessed on D2L by clicking on the Communications tab and selecting Zoom.

Note: If you will not be able to participate in synchronous in-class or online class sessions owing to time differences or geographical location, then consult with the instructor to see if accommodation is possible or arrange to take this course in a future term.

Online Quizzes and Exams: You will be allowed a minimum window of 24 hours to access online quizzes and exams, but there may be a time limit for completing a quiz once you open it. Read the description carefully. The time specified for any timed online assessments includes 50% extra time.

Instructor:	Dr. Arti Modgill
Email:	arti.modgill2@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	Wednesdays 9:30am to 11:30am *(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 on D2L. Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.

The course involves collaborative group work. Note that the part of the course is reading intensive so you can get a firm grasp of the content and apply it to course projects.

Objectives of the Course

Students who successfully complete the course should know how 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 basic workplace communication genres, including formal reports, proposals, letters, memos, emails, and, optionally, résumés, instructions, technical descriptions, and websites.

• work effectively and cooperatively in groups.

• write and design effective print and online documents, using headings, lists, well-crafted paragraphs, and white space.

• effectively design and use figures and tables.

• conduct secondary research (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 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 the latest version of either APA or IEEE style (or both).

• edit documents to eliminate common writing errors and weaknesses.

• design effective PowerPoint slides.

Textbooks and Readings
Required Reading: Ewald, Thorsten. *Writing in the Technical Fields: A Practical Guide.* 3rd ed., Oxford University Press Canada, 2017.

Learning Technologies and Requirements
& Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices
This is an online course. 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

Assignments and Evaluation

Assessed Components
Short Writing Activities 20% (4 x 5% each) - Due: Jan. 28, Feb. 18, Mar. 18, Apr. 1 (11:59pm) These short writing activities will include revision assignments and short posts to D2L of 200 words. These activities are opportunities to apply knowledge from readings to your writing. Completed activities will receive points out of 3 (good 3, satisfactory 2, completed 1). Late submissions will not be accepted. Assignments will be available on D2L for one week from 9:00 a.m. on Mondays and are due Friday at 11:59 p.m. • All students are required to work on their own to do the Short Writing Assignments. Full details are provided on D2L.
Reading Quizzes 20% (2 x 10% each) - Due: Feb. 11 & Mar. 25 (11:59pm) The reading quizzes will be available from 9:00am on Wednesdays to 11:59pm on Fridays and students will have 2 hours to complete them from their start time. These open book quizzes will be multiple choice (approx. 30 questions) and cover concepts from readings. Quizzes are timed and must be written in one sitting. I will closely monitor my email between 9:00 and 11:00 on Wednesdays, so you may wish to schedule your writing to overlap with those hours. Late submissions will not be accepted.
Cover Letter and Resume 15% - Due: Feb. 4 (11:59 pm) These two short writing assignments (each approx. 500 words) are designed to help you deliver different messages in a concise and coherent way. The styles and genres of your writing samples will vary by medium and message and aim to improve your professional and technical writing. See the detailed assignment guidelines on D2L.
Report Proposal 15% - Group. Due: Mar. 4 (11:59pm) In small self-selected groups of 4, students will write a proposal (750-1000) outlining what you aim to achieve in your formal report. Secondary and primary research will be necessary to complete the proposal. See the detailed assignment guidelines on D2L.
Formal Report 30% - Group. Due: Apr. 8 (11:59pm) Your group will compose a formal recommendation report, which typically might take the form of an evaluation report (social media audit). The body of the report (including the introduction, methods, findings, conclusions, and recommendations) must be 2000-2500 words and include a minimum of one effectively formatted table or graph. The report must also include the usual front matter (title page, executive summary, table of contents, list of figures and tables) as well as a reference list and appendices if needed. See the detailed assignment guidelines on D2L.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: You must complete the following course components to pass the course: both individual short writing assignments, the group report proposal, and the group formal report. In addition, you are less likely to receiving a passing grade if you miss many of the other course components i.e. Weekly Lab Activities. If you fail to submit an assignment, 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.

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, letter grades will be used for written assignments, while points will be awarded for all the weekly activities.

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 deferral of term work, see
https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html
For information about deferrals of final examinations, see
https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html
For information about requesting a reappraisal of course work or of a final grade, see
https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.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, Zoom, Yuja, etc., see
https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/resources-for-students/. (Find the topic menu under the icon to the
left of the ELEARN banner.) IT support is available at itsupport@ucalgary.ca or by calling
403-220.5555.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings: Refer to D2L for more detailed information on
topics covered, assigned readings, and scheduled activities.