

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

**Communication and Media Studies COMS 463 Lecture 01**  
**Rhetorical Communication in Online Environments**  
**Fall 2016**

**Thursday, September 15 - Thursday, December 8 (excluding Thursday, November 10)**  
**Lectures: (R 12:30pm-14:20) Tutorials: (R 14:30pm-16:20pm)**

**Instructor:** Dr. Lisa Stowe  
**Office:** SS206  
**Office Phone:** 403 220 4840  
**E-Mail:** lstowe@ucalgary.ca  
**Office Hours:** T/TH 11:00am-12:00pm

**Course Description**

This course will explore the theory and criticism of professional communication. Using rhetorical perspectives, the course will cover social-cultural perspectives on professional communication. Students will read a selection of articles outlining the history, ethics and theoretical approaches to professional communication. Students will critique samples of professional communication arising from a variety of organizational contexts in a variety of media and genres. Students will also engage in hands on analysis of an organization's web content to understand how effective online communication develops strong ethical accountability. The course may also incorporate some degree of experiential learning and professional communication practice.

**Additional Material**

This course requires students to complete a major web based group project using the concept and theories discussed in class. There is allotted class time for the group project and there will be an emphasis on group collaboration throughout the semester.

**Objectives of the Course**

To understand socio-cultural and rhetorical perspectives of professional communication.

To apply theories to the criticism and production of professional discourse.

To learn the specific knowledge, technologies and skills needed to collaboratively construct and analyze effective online professional communications.

To learn the specific rhetorical skills, knowledge and technologies to effectively construct a variety of web based documents.

To learn how to work in a group that simulates a workplace environment.

To create and learn in a collaborative and safe environment.

### **Textbooks and Readings**

MacLennan, J. (2008). *Readings for technical communication*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford UP.

Other readings will be posted on D2L.

### **Internet and electronic communication device information**

Because of the themes and objectives of this course, laptops and other computer devices are welcomed in class but are to be only used for class activities and note taking. Please be respectful of your fellow classmates while using computers.

### **Assignments and Evaluation**

Weight	Course components	Due
30%	<p>2 Reading Responses (worth 15% each)</p> <p>Students will respond in a critical, well written essay to two articles from course assigned material. Reading responses will address a number of assigned questions and will show an understanding and synthesis of the article's main ideas and how they relate to the overall objectives of the course. More details will be posted in the assignment guidelines in D2L.</p> <p>Length: 850-1000 words</p>	Oct. 6/Nov. 24
15%	<p>Project Proposal</p> <p>Each group will submit a project proposal outlining their website development plan. Proposals will include a description of the organization that is the subject of the website; project description and justification or why this organization needs a web presence; a short literature review that outlines the theoretical concepts anchoring the project; an explanation and justification for which website construction platform they will be using; a breakdown of individual duties with a Gantt chart or other task table format; an explanation and justification of the online collaboration system, like google docs or zoho, that will be used as the main form of communication for the group; a list of possible challenges the group might face throughout this process; and a copy of a group contract that is agreed to and signed by all group members.</p> <p>Length: 5-7 pages</p>	Oct. 27

25%	<p>Midterm exam – (closed book)</p> <p>The exam will cover all of the reading material done to date. Students will complete a variety of questions which may include multiple choice, fill in the blanks, matching, short answer and a longer answer essay</p> <p>Time allowed 2 hours</p>	Nov. 3
10%	<p>Website Launch</p> <p>Students will present or “launch” their web based project to the rest of the class, highlighting their creative and decision making processes and walking us through the website. This launch can take the format of a ppt, press or another presentation strategy.</p> <p>Length: 10 minute presentation</p>	Dec. 8
20%	<p>Group Project Process Portfolio</p> <p>Students will digitally submit a process portfolio (as a pdf document) which will highlight and paint a picture of the process of creating a website for a particular organization. The portfolio will contain a number of documents including a justification for visual and graphic design with screenshot images; an information architecture assessment and rhetorical justification for content; an overview of the online ethical characteristics of the organization; an explanation with examples of the variety of genres within this organization; and a synthesis of how the course concepts and theories support or challenge the organization’s online presence.</p> <p>Each group member will also digitally submit an individual reflective evaluation on the process of working as a group on this project. These reflection essays will remain confidential between the individual group member and the instructor.</p> <p>Length: 15 pages (single spaced) max, excluding appendices</p>	Dec. 8

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No**

**Note:**

All assignments and exams must be completed or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

**Submission of Assignments:** Submission of Assignments: All assignments, with the exception of the mid-term exam will be submitted electronically via D2L. Instructions on how to upload documents in D2L will be covered in class.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at marked final exams in SS 320. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

**Note:** It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

### **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.

### **Student Accommodations:**

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit [www.ucalgary.ca/access/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/).

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework 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) should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
- When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.
- For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html> and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

### **Writing Skills Statement**

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will 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. Sources used in 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 & Grade Scale of the Department of Communication, Media and Film**

Final grades are reported as letter grades. However, assignments, exams, and other work in this course will be graded using raw scores (e.g., a score out of 15 for an assignment worth 15 /100 of the final grade)

The following chart outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. In calculating final grades in this course, letter grades will be converted to the midpoint of the percentage range, as shown in the final column of

the table below.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations**
<b>4.00</b>	Outstanding	<b>A+</b>	96 - 100%	98.0%
<b>4.00</b>	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	<b>A</b>	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
<b>3.70</b>		<b>A -</b>	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
<b>3.30</b>		<b>B+</b>	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
<b>3.00</b>	Good--clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	<b>B</b>	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
<b>2.70</b>		<b>B-</b>	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
<b>2.30</b>		<b>C+</b>	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
<b>2.00</b>	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	<b>C</b>	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
<b>1.70</b>		<b>C-</b>	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
<b>1.30</b>	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	<b>D+</b>	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
<b>1.00</b>		<b>D</b>	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
<b>0.00</b>	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	<b>F</b>	0- 49.99%	0%

\* If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades.

\*\* 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.

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. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436> . If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor TFDL, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

### 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 (e.g., surveys, interviews, or observations) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

### Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
<b>ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)</b>	SS 102 403-220-3580 <a href="mailto:artsads@ucalgary.ca">artsads@ucalgary.ca</a>
<b>CAMPUS SECURITY</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Calgary Police Service</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Emergency Text Messaging</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Emergency Evacuation &amp; Assembly</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Safewalk Program</b>	<a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a> <b>403-220-5333</b> <b>403-266-1234</b> <b>Emergency: call 911</b> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage</a> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints</a> If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a>
<b>DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>IT help line</b>	<a href="http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students">http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students</a> 403-220-5555 or <a href="mailto:itsupport@ucalgary.ca">itsupport@ucalgary.ca</a>

<p><b>STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Writing Support Services</b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Student Services Mobile App</b></li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/ssc">http://ucalgary.ca/ssc</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support">http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support</a></p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents">http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents</a></p>
<p><b>STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Faculty of Arts Reps</b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Student Ombudsman</b></li> </ul>	<p><a href="https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/">https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds">http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds</a></p>
<p><b>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Counselling Services</b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Health Services</b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE</b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Online resources and tips</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>403-210-9355</b> (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm</p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</a></p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</a></p> <p>403-266-HELP (4357)</p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</a></p> <p>If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.</p>

Schedule (see the next page)

## Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

Date	Topic/Reading	Computer Activities	Assignment Due
Thurs, Sept. 15	Introduction to the class Course Objectives Assignments		
Thurs, Sept. 22	<p><b>What is Technical Communication?</b></p> <p>MacLellan, J. (2008). Why communication matters. In MacLennan, J. (Ed.). (2008). <i>Readings for technical communication</i>. (pp.4-10). Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Bitzer, L.F. (2008). Functional communication: A situational perspective. In MacLennan, J. (Ed.). (2008). <i>Readings for technical communication</i>. (pp. 29-39). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.</p>	Organizing groups/Group Contracts/Google Drive and online collaboration systems	
Thursday, Sept. 29	<p><b>History of Technical Communication</b></p> <p>Connors, R. J. (2004). The rise of technical writing instruction in America. In Johnson-Eilola, J., &amp; Selber, S. A. (Eds.). (2004). <i>Central works in technical communication</i>. (pp. 3-19). Oxford University Press. D2L</p> <p>Rutter, R. (2004). History, rhetoric and humanism: Toward a more comprehensive definition of technical communication. In Johnson-Eilola, J., &amp; Selber, S. A. (Eds.). (2004). <i>Central works in technical communication</i>. (pp. 20-34). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. On D2L</p>	Using Wix	



Date	Topic/Reading	Computer Activities	Assignment Due
Thursday, Oct. 6	<p><b>Rhetoric and Technical Communication</b></p> <p>Smith, T. (2008). What connection does rhetorical theory have to technical and professional communication? In MacLennan, J. (Ed.). (2008). <i>Readings for technical communication</i>. (pp.114-120). Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Shay, J. (2008). Aristotle's <i>Rhetoric</i> as a handbook of leadership. In MacLennan, J. (Ed.). (2008). <i>Readings for technical communication</i>. (pp. 126-128). Oxford University Press.</p>	<p>What is your website's rhetorical situation?</p>	<p><b>First Reading Response Due (15%)</b></p>
Thursday, Oct. 13	<p><b>Perspectives on Audience and Context</b></p> <p>Elbow, P. (2008). Three tricky relationships to an audience. In MacLennan, J. (Ed.). (2008). <i>Readings for technical communication</i>. (pp. 208-218). Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Miller, C.R. (2008). What's practical about technical writing. In MacLennan, J. (Ed.). (2008). <i>Readings for technical communication</i>. (pp. 219-228). Oxford University Press.</p>	<p>Who is your website's audience and what is the context?</p>	

Date	Topic/Reading	Computer Activities	Assignment Due
Thursday, Oct. 20	<p><b>Ethics and Technical Communication</b></p> <p>Campbell, C.P. (2008). Ethos: Characters and ethics in technical writing. In MacLennan, J. (Ed.). (2008). <i>Readings for technical communication</i>. (pp. 300-310). Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Dombrowski, P.M. (2008). Can ethics be technologized? Lessons from Challenger, philosophy and rhetoric. In MacLennan, J. (Ed.). (2008). <i>Readings for technical communication</i>. (pp.330-318). Oxford University Press.</p>	How are you developing ethos in your website design?	
Thursday, Oct. 27	<p><b>Ethics and Technical Communication Cont'd</b></p> <p>Katz, S. B. (1992). The ethic of expediency: Classical rhetoric, technology, and the Holocaust. <i>College English</i>, 255-275. D2L</p> <p>Rice, J. A. (2014, October). A rhetorical reboot: Technical writing ethics in the age of digital media. In <i>Professional Communication Conference (IPCC), 2014 IEEE International</i> (pp. 1-4). IEEE. D2L</p>		<b>Project Proposal Due (15%)</b>
Thursday, Nov. 3	<b>Mid-term Exam (25%)</b>		<b>Mid-term Exam (25%)</b>
Thursday, Nov. 10	<b>No Class</b>		No Class: Midterm Break

Date	Topic/Reading	Computer Activities	Assignment Due
Thursday, Nov. 17	<p><b>Credibility in an online environment</b></p> <p>Mackiewicz, J. (2010). "The co-construction of credibility in online product reviews," Technical Communication Quarterly, 19 (4), 403-426.</p> <p>Mack, R. W., Blose, J. E., &amp; Pan, B. (2008). Believe it or not: Credibility of blogs in tourism. Journal of Vacation Marketing, 14(2), 133-144.</p>	Why should your audience trust you?	
Thursday, Nov. 24	TBA		<b>Second Reading Response Due (15%)</b>
Thursday, Dec. 1	TBA		
Thursday, Dec. 8	Website Launch Presentations		<b>Website Launch (10%)</b> <b>Website Portfolio Due (20%)</b>