University of Calgary Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communication and Media Studies COMS 363, L01 PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

Fall 2018

Fri., Sept. 7 – Fri., Dec. 7, 2018 (web-based; no classes)

Instructor: Jo-Anne Andre, M.A.

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E-Mail: andre@ucalgary.ca (Please put 363 in the subject line)

Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal

Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:00 to 5:00 or by appointment

Course description and objectives:

An introduction to professional and technical communication. Students will learn the rhetorical dimensions of workplace settings as well as the process of planning, researching, composing, and delivering professional and technical communication for various audiences.

Objectives of the course:

The course will help you develop

- a rhetorical approach to crafting documents--one in which you critically consider your purpose, the needs of your audience, and relevant features of the context
- familiarity with the conventions and composing strategies for a range of written genres, including proposals and reports
- document design strategies to ensure that your documents and websites look professional, promote easy information retrieval, and use visuals to communicate information effectively
- writing and editing strategies to keep your writing focused, coherent, and readable
- familiarity with tools for online research and competence in using APA documentation style
- competence in preparing PowerPoint presentations.

Required textbook:

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

+ additional online readings as indicated in the detailed schedule at the end of this outline.

Additional information:

This section is entirely web-based, with no meeting times or labs. To do well in the course, plan to spend 5 hours a week on readings, assignments, and group work. You should also check D2L and your @ucalgary.ca email frequently for course updates, arrange for an update feed from D2L, and send yourself a test email from D2L in week 1 to ensure that you

do not miss any important information. You are also welcome to review assignment drafts with the instructor during office hours.

Assignments & evaluation:

All written assignments worth 10% or more must be completed in order to pass the course. Except for group assignments, all assignments are to be done individually without collaboration.

Due	Assignment	%	Overview (See the CONTENT area of D2L for detailed guidelines)
ongoing	Professionalism & Participation	5%	 Your professionalism & participation (P&P) will be assessed on an ongoing basis. For each usability survey (or test) you complete for another group before Nov. 27, you will earn 1%. (Please submit a final list of completed surveys and dates of completion to the designated D2L dropbox.) At her discretion, the instructor or your marker may reduce P&P grades for unprofessional emails (e.g., ones with an inappropriate tone or "hey" for the salutation); for repeated use of .pdf or .pages formatting for assignments rather than the required .doc, .docx, or .rtf format; and for documented issues related to failure to complete promised contributions to group work on time or to attend and contribute to scheduled group meetings.
Optional	Alternative-to- quiz assignment		In lieu of any one of the three quizzes, you may complete a written exercise from the textbook as assigned by the instructor. This option is open to any student, including students who miss completing a quiz by the due date. However, all alternative assignments must be assigned by the instructor.
Sept.14	Quiz 1 on D2L (closes at 11:59 pm)	5%	10-question open-book multiple-choice quiz based on Sept. 7 & 14 readings. Quiz will open Sept. 7 or earlier.
Sept. 21	Visual Critique (memo-email)	10%	A 3- or 4-paragraph memo (formatted as a hypothetical email) commenting on strengths and weaknesses in and recommending improvements to the visuals in the 363 sample report <i>Wateraid-1</i> (on D2L).
Sept. 28	Quiz 2 on D2L (closes at 11:59 pm)	10%	10- to 20-question open-book multiple-choice quiz based on Sept. 21 & 28 readings. Quiz will open Sept. 14 or earlier.
Oct. 5	Group Task 1 PPT (8%) Reflection (2%), with group contract appendix	10%	 This assignment, to be done in your project groups, has 3 parts: A 10- to 15-slide PPT on effective group work for a student audience based on https://bokcenter.harvard.edu/group-work A 1-page reflection memo addressed to your marker describing the group process for developing the PowerPoint and reflecting on aspects of the process that worked well and not so well and commenting on how your group might work more effectively in completing your usability study tasks. Attached to your email, a 1- or 2-page group contract for the group website usability study. Besides outlining your group rules and expectations as well as how group problems will be dealt with, the contract should specify the website your group will analyze and which group member will be responsible for which of the following 3 criteria for the individual heuristic analyses (due Oct. 19) to be folded into your usability study: Organization of information & navigation tools and links Page layout, design elements, typography, headings, & visuals Content (clarity, helpfulness) & usability of interactive features (e.g., membership forms, contact links) Note: Your marker will comment on your contract, but it will not be graded. (However, if the final contract is not included with your Nov. 9 group proposal, your proposal will lose one partial letter grade.)

Oct. 19	Heuristic analysis	15%	Each member of your project group will submit an individual heuristic analysis of your target website focusing on his or her assigned criterion for analysis (as indicated in your group contract). Format: 2- to 4-page memo-report.
Nov. 9	Usability Study Proposal (group)	10%	This proposal will include an overview of the website chosen for analysis, a description of your research method, an overview of your evaluation criteria (from the individual heuristic analyses), a work schedule, a draft set of usability survey questions, and your group contract (in an appendix) Format: 3- to 4-page single-spaced memo (plus appendices)
Nov. 23	Quiz 3 on D2L (closes at 11:59 pm)	10%	10- to 20-question open-book multiple-choice quiz based on Nov. 2 & 9 readings. This quiz will open Nov. 9 or earlier.
Dec. 7	Usability Study Final Report (group)	25%	This formal report with cover letter will present your group's usability study research, key findings, and recommendations. Format: 12- to 16-page formal report + 1-page cover letter (The word count for the report includes all elements except for the reference list and appendices.) → Your feedback is important. If you haven't already done so, please complete the course evaluation via the links provided.
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Assignment guidelines, questions, and marking groups:

Please review the assignment guidelines (under Content in D2L) and use them as a checklist before you submit your assignments. If you have questions about assignments, please contact the instructor.

Please review your marked assignments on D2L and carefully edit upcoming assignments for issues noted in previous assignments. If you have questions about marked assignments. you may review them with the instructor during office hours or contact your marker.

Students will be assigned to one of the following marking sections, with members of the same group assigned to the same marking section.

Marking section 1	Jo-Anne Andre	andre@ucalgary.ca
Marking sections 2 & 3	Christine Sopczak	cmsopcza@ucalgary.ca
Marking sections 4, 5, & 6	Andrea Hanslip	arhansli@ucalgary.ca
Marking sections 7 & 8	(To be added)	

Group assignments:

For the PPT & Usability Study project and assignments, students will work in the same groups of 3. Students will have until 11:59 Monday, September 17 to set up groups of 3 on D2L; students not in groups by then will be randomly assigned to groups.

Group assignments should only include the names of members who contributed to the work; including names of group members who did not contribute 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:

Use .docx and .pptx (or .rtf) file formats for assignments. Do not use .pdf (or Pages) file formats as markers cannot add comments to them. Include your last name(s) in your file names (e.g., 363 proposal Collins, Chu, & Malor.docx).

Be sure to include your name on all assignments. 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

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

Note: Students are responsible for keeping a copy of each submitted assignment and for ensuring that the correct copy of the assignment is uploaded to D2L.

Policy for late assignments:

- Quizzes are due at 11:59 pm on the due date, with no extended access. Watch the news feed in D2L for information about when quizzes become available. (They will open at least one week in advance of the specified due dates.)
- Written assignments (except for the take-home exam) are due at 11:59 on the Friday due date, but may be submitted up to 9:00 am Monday morning with no late penalty.
- Late assignments will normally be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late, including weekends.

Assignment length requirements:

Assignments 20% over the stated maximum length will be subject to a one-level grade penalty (e.g., from B to B-) at the marker's discretion.

Grade reassessments:

Within 15 days of the return of an assignment, students may request a reassessment. Such requests should be directed to the instructor (by email), be professional in tone, and clearly explain the grounds for the reassessment. As explained in the *University Calendar*, grades may be further appealed at the department level within 15 days. Note that grades may be increased or lowered on reassessment or formal grade appeal.

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/.

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_0.pdf.

Please note:

- Students seeking accommodations for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors directly. 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

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 http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/node/208. If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd 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

Grading system & Department of Communication, Media and Film grade scale:

Written assignments in this course will be given letter grades, but percentage grades will be used for participation and quizzes. The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film:

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	Α	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70	Approaching excellent performance	Α-	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30	Exceeding good performance	B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good performance	В	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	С	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%

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

Research ethics:

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys and interviews) 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 http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/research/research-ethics. This course has received course-based ethics approval from the Faculty Research Ethics Committee. All usability research in this course is to involve only Coms 363 students from this course section as research participants. Students must abide by the research ethics guidelines posted on D2L.

^{**} These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

Important information, services, and contacts for students:

For information about	Visit or contact
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (PIC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 picarts@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333
Calgary Police Service	403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911
Emergency Text Messaging	http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage
Emergency Evacuation & Assembly	http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints
Safewalk Program	If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students
IT help line	403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc
Writing Support Services	http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support
Student Services Mobile App	http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS	
Faculty of Arts Reps	http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html
Student Ombudsman	http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds
SU WELLNESS CENTRE	403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm
Counselling Services	http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling
Health Services	http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health
Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE	403-266-HELP (4357)
Online resources and tips	http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus
	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.

Weekly syllabus for Coms 363 (L01) Fall 2018

• Please complete the readings before the listed date and enter due date reminders into your calendar.

Instructor: J. Andre

• Note that written assignments and quizzes are due at 11:59 pm Friday, but written assignments (except the final report) have a no late-penalty grace period to 9:00 am the following Monday. There is no grace period for the D2L quizzes, and quizzes will not be reopened after the due date.

Friday	Due	Focus & Readings
Sept. 7		Introduction to technical and professional writing
		Course outline (posted on D2L).
		• Ewald, Ch. 1 (p. 1-16) & PPT on Ch. 1
		• Ewald, Appendix A (p. 269-283).
		+ Scan for future reference: Ewald, Appendix B & the Glossary
Sept. 14	D2L quiz 1 (5%) Open book,	 Designing and using visuals Ewald, Ch. 10 (p. 177-190) & PPT on Ch. 10 – Technical Graphics
	untimed, 10 questions based	Few, S. (2007). Save the pies for dessert. Retrieved July 5, 2018, from https://www.perceptualedge.com/articles/visual_business_intelligence/save_the_pies
	on Sept. 7 & 14 readings. (Click on the tab for	 for_dessert.pdf North Carolina State University (NCSU). (2004). LabWrite Resources. Retrieved July 5, 2018, from http://labwrite.ncsu.edu/res/res-homepage.htm
	Assessments)	Wainer, H. (1992). Understanding graphs and tables. <i>Educational Researcher</i> , <i>21</i> (1), 14-23. Retrieved July 5, 2018, from http://www.ieter.org/atable/1177/34//3corg. 1//corg.esen.tele.contents.
		http://www.jstor.org/stable/1176346?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents
Sept. 21	Visual critique (memo-email)	 Writing effectively: Editing for sentence structure, clarity, & conciseness Ewald, Ch. 2 (p. 20-33) & PPT on Ch. 2 Technical Sentences
	(10%)	Ewald, Ch. 5 (p. 69-80) & PPT on Ch. 5 – Routine Correspondence
	(1070)	Assignment guidelines (posted on D2L) for visual critique memo.
		Important: As soon as your group is formed, you should arrange for a group meeting as you have a group assignment due Oct. 5.
Sept. 28	D2L quiz 2 (10%)	Writing effectively: Editing for conciseness, coherence, & parallelism
0 0 0 1 1 1	Untimed, open	• Ewald, Ch. 3 (p. 37-44) & PPT on Ch. 3 Technical Paragraphs
	book, 10 to 20	• Ewald, Ch. 4 (p. 49-65) & PPT on Ch. 4 – Parallelism, Lists, and Layout
	questions based on Sept. 21 & 28 readings	Note: for extra practice, feel free to do any of the exercises in the textbook (especially from chapters 2, 3, and 4) and to review them with the instructor during office hours.
Oct. 5	Group task 1	Using PowerPoint Intelligently & Collaborating effectively
	(10%) -PPT (8%)	Brent, D., & Andre, J. (2011). Using PowerPoint Intelligently [PPT on D2L]
	+ reflection (2%)	Ewald, Ch. 14 (pp. 258-263), section on "Designing and Using Slides"
	with group contract appended	Ewald, Ch. 8 (p. 144-157) + PPT for Ch. 8 – Intercultural Communication, Collaborative Writing, & Document Control
		 Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, Harvard University. (2010). Working in groups: A note to faculty and a quick guide for students. Retrieved July 5, 2018, from https://bokcenter.harvard.edu/working-groups

Oct. 12		Designing Effective Websites & Assessing Aspects of Usability
		Note: Besides reading the overview material, focus your readings this week mainly on the assigned usability criterion you have been assigned as part of your group project.
		Assignment guidelines for the Heuristic analysis (due Oct. 19)
		Overview & Universal Usability
		 Ch. 1 & 2, Lynch, P. J. & Horton, S. (2009). Web Style Guide, 3rd ed. Retrieved July 5, 2018, from http://webstyleguide.com/wsg3/index.html;
		Ewald, Ch. 13 Section on usability (p. 242-244)
		Organization of information & navigation tools and links
		Ch. 3, 4, 5, Lynch, P. J. & Horton, S. at http://webstyleguide.com/wsg3/index.html
		Page layout, design elements, typography, headings, & visuals
		• Ch. 6, 7, 8, 11,12, Lynch, P. J. & Horton, S. at http://webstyleguide.com/wsg3/index.html
		Content (clarity, helpfulness) & usability of interactive features (e.g., membership forms, contact links)
		Ch. 9, 10, Lynch, P. J. & Horton, S. at http://webstyleguide.com/wsg3/index.html
		 Morkes, J. & Nielsen, J. (1997). Concise, scannable, and objective: How to write for the web. At http://www.useit.com/papers/webwriting/writing.html
Oct. 19	Heuristic	Citing sources in IEEE & APA styles
	Analysis (15%)	• Ewald, Ch. 9 (p. 160-174) & PPT for Ch. 9 – References and Citations.
	(individual memo report)	SFU Library. (2018). General notes: APA (6 th ed., 2010) citation guide. https://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/cite-write/citation-style-guides/apa (plus see other APA materials posted on D2L)
		Ewald, Appendix C (p. 299-301) – Ethics
Oct. 26		Writing proposals and reports
		 Ewald, Ch. 6 (p. 84-109, esp. 96-100) & PPT for Ch. 6 – Technical Reports and Documents
Nov. 2		 Designing usability tests Jerz, D. (2010). Usability testing: 8 quick tips for designing tests. Retrieved July 5, 2018, from http://jerz.setonhill.edu/design/usability/tips.htm
		 U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. (n.d). Sections on Usability Evaluation Basics. Retrieved July 5, 2018, from http://www.usability.gov
		 Assignment guidelines for proposal & final report (in the Website Usability Project document on D2L) and the sample reports posted.
Nov. 9	Usability Study Proposal (10%, group)	Writing Definitions, Descriptions, Instructions, Procedures, and Manuals. 10- to 20-question open-book multiple-choice quiz based on Dec. 7 readings. Quiz will open Nov. 30 or earlier. • Ewald, Ch. 12 & PPT for Ch. 12 – Technical Definitions and Descriptions
		Ewald, Ch. 13 & PPT for Ch. 13 – Instructions, Procedure, and Manuals
Nov. 16	Reading week	Fall break reading week (Mon. through Fri.). Office hours cancelled this week.

Nov. 23	D2L Quiz 3 (10%) Untimed, open book, 10 to 20 questions based on Nov. 2 & 9 readings	 Writing Formal Reports Ewald, Ch. 7 (p. 114- 142) & PPT for Ch. 7 – Formal Reports Assignment guidelines (in the Website Usability Project guidelines document) & sample reports on D2L
Nov. 30		Work on Usability Study Research & Final Report (no assigned readings)
Dec. 7	Usability Study Final Report (25%, group)	Work on Usability Study Research & Final Report (no assigned readings)