Communications Studies COMS 463 - Lecture 01
Rhetoric & Professional Communication
Winter 2011
MW 12:00 - 13:50 in Scurfield Hall 274

Instructor: Dr. Tania S. Smith
Office Location: SS 326
Office Phone: 220-7774
E-Mail: smit@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: http://people.ucalgary.ca/~smit
Office Hours: W 16:30-18:00 and by appointment

Additional information

This section of the course involves learning and using communication technology, working in teams, and being involved in a real community-based "service-learning" project involving the development of website content.

The course content and communication is based on Blackboard in combination with a public website at https://sites.google.com/site/coms463w11/   See "Textbooks and Readings" for additional technology and software requirements.

Course description

Theory and criticism of professional communication. Using rhetorical perspectives, the course will cover social-cultural perspectives on professional communication. Students will critique samples of professional communication arising from a variety of organizational contexts in a variety of media and genres. The course may also incorporate some degree of experiential learning and professional communication practice.

Objectives of the course

 - To understand socio-cultural and rhetorical perspectives on 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 effective online professional communication on the course theme.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Students are encouraged to bring laptops to class and use them as they wish. Please see other areas of this course outline that refer to technologies and related policies.

Textbooks and Readings

Required Textbook: Yahoo! (2010). *The Yahoo! Style Guide: The Ultimate Sourcebook for Writing, Editing, and Creating Content for the Digital World*. St. Martin's Griffin. (Available at the University Bookstore)

Additional readings: TBA: Gathered from various textbooks and online sources according to Copyright policies and

placed online in password-protected areas accessible to students only, free of charge to students.

Software: Microsoft Office 2007-2010 software is highly recommended in order to use document and poster formatting, analysis and graphing features and to prevent file incompatibility issues among team members (docx, pptx and xlsx file types). Students can obtain Microsoft Office 2010 for a highly discounted price--see the "U of C Student Laptop & Software Purchase Program" at http://www.ucalgary.ca/it/studentlaptops.

Online technologies: A free Zoho.com account will be needed for the course's online project management system, and a Wordpress blog account will be needed for web assignment creation and submission. A free Google Account will be needed by teams' student project coordinators. The free Mozilla Firefox browser is recommended for the course's various technologies.

Assignments & due dates

There are 5 assignments and a class participation score listed below in bold text. All other items listed are for "required components" of assignments such as drafts. Required components are not graded but carry late penalties on the associated assignment if handed in late or incomplete. Requiring an early component helps students to complete portions of a complex assignment in stages and to receive peer or instructor feedback before the complete assignment is due for grading.

Jan 26: Required component: Preliminary plan (team) 750w. Appendices include team contract, service-learning contract, and drafts of ethics forms. Component of Full Proposal

Jan. 28, Mar. 04, Mar. 25: Required components: 3 Short Online Reflections (Individual) of 250 w and two replies to others' reflections posted to an internal class discussion board. Reflections are a required component of the Final Reflective Essay Exam due at the end of term

Feb. 04 Required component: Sources & Critiques (Individual) spreadsheet of 5 items, in APA format. This is a component of the Web Content Critique

Feb. 11 *15% Web Content Critique. (Individual) 1000w minimum critiquing at least 3 items.

Feb. 18 Required component: Draft of proposal. At least minimum length and all sources and appendices, requiring only minor editing. (Reading week is Feb 19-27).

Mar. 02 20% Full Proposal (Team) 1500w minimum, edited by all team members, and properly formatted.

Mar. 04: Required Reflection #2 (see Jan. 28, above)

Mar. 11 Required component. Draft of Web Content (individual). This is based on research conducted to date, and is an early component of the Draft due Mar. 30

Mar. 18 *20% Web Content: Content of 2000w min. per team member. Each student other than the team's project coordinator is responsible for interviewing 3 people, OR profiling 6 documents, OR observing 2 public events, OR a weighted combination, or a substitution approved by the instructor.

Mar. 25: Required Reflection #3 (see Jan. 28, above)

Mar. 30 Required component. Draft of Report and Poster (Team) submitted for review.

April 15: 20% Report and Poster Presentation (Team) 1500w Report and 3'x2' poster.

Apr. 21   15% Final Reflective Essay Exam (Individual) of 1500w that explains 3 designated course concepts and applies them to students' learning and communication experiences. Students may quote or paraphrase from textbooks and readings, from their earlier required reflections, and from the posted reflections of their peers (all must be properly cited). The essay concepts are announced April 08 and the essay exam is submitted electronically between April 11and 21.

Apr. 21   10% Class Participation. (Individual) This score is partly based on data gathered from students through a required **Self/Peer Assessment survey** and partly based on the instructor's observations, notes, and records. The online survey opens after the final report is submitted and will be available at the link provided until end of day, April 21.

* Completion of the Critique and Final Website Content assignments are necessary in order to pass the course.

Note: 45% of the course grade is based on work completed during or after the last week of class. However, the final assignments are based on components completed earlier in the term with significant guidance and feedback. Team assignments are 50% based on a score for individual contributions (as listed by authors).

All assignments must be submitted electronically by each individual student via Blackboard with backups elsewhere online. Please see additional assignment policies below.

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. Penalties for late required homework components will be applied to the final versions. One individual assignment per term may be submitted 48 h late without penalty, but this extended grace period must be explicitly claimed by the student when handing it in, along with a reason for the delay, sent via email.

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 using their ID number. In this course, all assignments are submitted electronically through Blackboard, thereby associating the file with the ID number of the student.   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 system is used in the Dept. of Communication and. The instructor also uses a Grading Rubric (available on the course website) to determine quality levels on various components of assignments (i.e. content, organization, grammar, use of sources, APA citation).

	Grading Scale
A+	96 - 100.00 %
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 - 49.99

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 (see "Academic Misconduct" below). Consequences may 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 assignments. 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. This course uses APA style.

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

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 U of C Research Ethics "Information for Applicants," sections 3.0 to 9.0, inclusive: http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/research/html/ethics/info_undergrad.html

Assignment submission

Do NOT submit assignments as email attachments. All assignments are submitted electronically by each individual author, even if there is one version of a team assignment.

Submit each of your assignments through Blackboard's "Assignments" area to associate it with your ID number. Submission via Blackboard>Assignments is the official way to declare "this is the file I take responsibility for and I am handing it in by this date/time." Immediately after submission via Bb>Assignments, verify it: re-enter the assignment link, click "OK" past the message that states your assignment has been submitted, and download and view your own submitted file. Keep a personal copy of all assignments you submit. If there is a technical problem, inform the instructor immediately and back up your file as directed.

For all team assignments, an identical backup copy must also be posted online where it is accessible to all team members and the instructor. Please do not put your private ID numbers on drafts or coauthored documents that others may view.

Assignment Length

Minimum length estimates are based on the least amount of text possible to cover the complete assignment if it is very concise. There is no bonus or penalty for extra length. Most people will need to go beyond the minimum length, especially if your writing style is more diffuse. It is advisable not to go beyond 2x the required length, and the quality will suffer if you include irrelevant information or if your document is wordy or involves unnecessary repetition.

Minimum length requirements do NOT include a) *quotations* longer than 40 words, b) *borrowed* media such as images, figures or tables you did not create yourself, c) *front matter* such as title pages, tables of contents, and abstracts, and d) *end matter* such as reference lists and appendices.

Assignment file formats & file names

Documents for submission or sharing must be in Microsoft Office formats or .pdf, or accessible online via a URL with proper sharing permissions. Instead of spaces, use the underscore key (_). Do not use any special characters in file names ($&+*) since this may result in file corruption during upload/download. Use the following format for naming your files:

Critique_LastnameFirstname.docx
PreliminaryPlan_TeamName.doc

Due dates

All assignments are due by 8PM on the deadline date (with 12 hours' grace for unexpected difficulties with technology, scheduling, or short term illness). Each individual is responsible for submitting a copy of a team assignment by the due date.

Assignment feedback

The normal turnaround time for feedback and grades on weighted assignments is 2 weeks after the deadline. More time may be needed if the time frame includes holidays. Assignment feedback files will be provided via Blackboard. If instructor comments are unclear or you would like further explanation or education, drop in during office hours or arrange an appointment to go over them with the instructor.

Grades on team assignments

Team assignment grades are based on 50% for the overall assignment's quality. This assessment and feedback is shared with the whole team. The remaining 50% of the assignment score is based on the quality and quantity of *individual* contributions listed, and is confidential to the individual student. Team documents will identify section authors and provide a summary of the contributions of each author (writing, editing, data entry, data analysis, etc.). For the final report, self/peer-evaluation survey results provide additional information about individual contribution quality and quantity.

Grade appeals

If you wish to appeal or discuss your grade on an assignment, please e-mail the instructor within 5 business days of receiving the grade (the university's appeals policy grants a 15 day limit, but delays can cause problems). A personal consultation or telephone call may be required. Grades may be lowered or increased on appeal.

Revision policy

If the instructor deems it appropriate, students may be permitted to revise ONE individual assignment, either the Critique or the Web Content assignment. Revision provides students with an additional opportunity to learn, but it entails additional effort for both the student and the instructor and is therefore not entered into lightly. 1. Request the revision option by email within 5 business days of receiving the grade on the original assignment in order to set up an appointment for a revision consultation. 2. At the time of the appointment, the instructor will determine whether revision is ethical and feasible based on the type and degree of improvement that can be made. 3. If revision is permitted, the new version's deadline will be determined, normally no later than 7 days after the consultation. The deadline will be confirmed through email. The revised file is submitted through email with an online backup file. Late penalties apply. The student must accept the risk that the new version may not receive a higher score. 4. The grade of the original version and revised version will be averaged in order to obtain the new score.

Teams' use of technology

Teams are expected to conduct all important team communication and email through Zoho, using a Project portal for each team set up by the instructor via her paid Zoho account. Zoho can be integrated with normal email and should be used according to instructions. Notes from team/instructor meetings and oral/texting communications should be written up by team members and sent via Zoho so that there is a stable record. All important team files should be found within Zoho. Students must immediately inform teammates or the instructor when technical problems interfere with the timely submission of one's work to teammates or to meet a course deadline.

Instructor communication

The instructor is available for questions and consultations in class, immediately before and after class, during office hours, by appointment, and via email, class discussion board, or Zoho notifications. The instructor does not take phone calls outside of office hours without appointments, and does not use voice mail. To arrange an in-person or telephone consultation, check the instructor's public appointment calendar and email a suggested time http://people.ucalgary.ca/~smit/OfficeHours.htm .

All important communications with the instructor should be sent or confirmed via email. The instructor will attempt to respond to email within 2 business days; if the message is urgent, please state "urgent" in the subject line. Use appropriate key words in the subject line, and begin your email with a concise sentence explaining your request. If no response has been received from the instructor within 2 business days, students are encouraged to send a reminder. If a file attachment is larger than 500MB, do not attach it. State where it can be found in Zoho or Blackboard file areas.

Research ethics

Do not begin any research with human subjects until you have received approval on your recruitment and consent forms via a team appointment with the instructor or an email/telephone consultation. All research recruitment, consent, and data handling must comply with University of Calgary research ethics guidelines and our course's approved methods (search our course website for "ethics"). Falsification of research data is a form of academic misconduct. To discourage falsified data, reports include a research appendix with signed consent forms or survey data with verifiable participant information. Serious breaches in research ethics will be reported to ethics committees

and may result in academic misconduct procedures and failure on assignments. Missing or unverifiable research ethics appendix items (i.e. a signed consent form) may result in a penalty of 10% to individuals.

Privacy and copyright

Students will be expected to share their written work such as drafts and assignments with other students enrolled in the course, as directed. Students are expected to respect each other's privacy and copyright and not distribute written work beyond the boundaries of the course without the author's prior written permission. Students may quote from another student's unpublished course work as appropriate, but must cite them appropriately.

Students who collaborate with external organizations or individuals in a partnership are expected to share contact information and drafts with them as necessary. At the end of the course, according to the terms of their service-learning contract, the community partner may expect to receive a copy of the student's work for internal use.

To enable the dissemination of communication products to the wider community, students have the option of providing the university or community partner with further permission to publish their assignments should such an opportunity arise, based on the Creative Commons license (see http://creativecommons.ca/).

Team split-up

If one or more team members are not meeting team standards in terms of quantity, quality, or timeliness of contributions, one or more team members should consult with the instructor in a timely manner. A team split is necessary if team issues are causing team members to fall behind schedule or experience undue interpersonal stress, or if it is likely that some members' grades will suffer from poorly skilled members' contributions while other members will unfairly benefit from highly skilled members' contributions. The latest opportunity to split up a team is one week prior to the deadline of the final report. See further procedures and policies on the course website.

Instructor's Research

To improve the quality of teaching in this subject area, your instructor occasionally analyzes data about student learning that is gathered naturally in the course of teaching, and may present these findings at conferences or in academic publications or online publications. After the course is over, the instructor or a third party may email you a request to participate in a survey, interview, or to use your assignments as research data. You are free to decline participation or withdraw participation at any time. Unless you give consent, data specific to your course work and participation will not be included in such research.

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/cfreb

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

The schedule and calendar will be publicly available at the course website https://sites.google.com/site/coms463w11/