

Communications Studies COMS 463 L20
Rhetoric and Professional Communication
TR 12:00-15:50

Instructor: Dr. Richard Brock
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:00-12:00, or by appointment

Calendar 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.

Description and Objectives

The key word for our study of rhetoric and professional communication in online settings will be “impact.” Our class will consider the impact web-based professional communication has on its target audiences, and the ethical implications attached to this impact. We will divide our time equally between studying the rhetorical techniques and effects of online communications and designing web-based content that takes these principles into account. Group-based project assignments will allow for collaborative learning.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Cellphones and other communication devices should be turned off at all times during lecture times. Lab time will be provided for working on design projects, but ordinarily laptop computers should not be used in regular class time. If there are reasons why you believe you should be exempt from these rules (for example, a learning disability), please contact me before the term starts or at the first class to discuss these reasons with me.

Textbooks and Readings:

Colleen Jones, *Clout: The Art and Science of Influential Web Content* (New Riders Press, 2010)

Anne Surma, *Public and Professional Writing: Ethics, Imagination and Rhetoric* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2005)

Assignments and Evaluation

- Rhetorical analysis of a web resource (individual)
 - 4-page analytical essay, due May 15 (15%)
- Ethical analysis of a web resource (individual)
 - 4-page analytical essay, due May 22 (15%)
- Website project proposal (group)
 - Collaborative document of 10-12 pages detailing concept, target audience, and purpose of proposed website and division of labour, due May 29 (10%)
- Website project (group)
 - Functional website, featuring 10-20 pages of web content, due June 14 (25%)
- Presentation on website project (group)
 - Oral and visual presentation demonstrating key features of website to the class, to be given on June 19 or 21 (15%)
- Critical reflection on website project (individual)
 - 10-page paper analyzing the group's website project and individual student's own contribution using rhetorical and ethical frameworks covered during class, due June 21 (20%)

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment.

Note: Please hand in your essays directly to your tutor or instructor if possible. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS320; a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available for after-hours submission. Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox.

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.

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: www.efwr.ucalgary.ca

Grading System

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture:

	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

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. 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 Digital Family

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.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 to follow at first class.