

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

COMS 363 L01 Professional and Technical Communication

FALL 2020: Tuesday, September 8 to Wednesday, December 9

(excluding Mon., Oct. 12 & week of Nov. 8 to 14). Due dates fall on Thursdays.

(web-based & entirely asynchronous)

IMPORTANT NOTE ON COURSE DELIVERY FOR FALL 2020:

This Fall 2020 course will be offered entirely online as part of the University's plan to ensure everyone's safety during the Covid-19 pandemic. Please read the outline carefully to see which course components will be offered synchronously (where you are expected to participate at the usual scheduled course time) and which components will be offered asynchronously (to be completed on your own time). Synchronous course sessions will normally be hosted on Zoom, a video-conferencing program. To access scheduled Zoom course sessions, go to D2L, click on the COMMUNICATION tab, and select Zoom 5 or 10 minutes before class is scheduled to begin.

Note that the time indicated on course outlines for all timed quizzes and exams in CMCL, COMS, and FILM courses includes 50% extra time to allow for technical difficulties.

Instructor:	Jo-Anne Andre (SS 300)
Email:	andre@ucalgary.ca [Please include COMS 363 in the subject line]. <i>I will try to respond to all emails within 24 hours.</i>
Phone:	(403) 547-8761
Web Page:	D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours:	Thursdays from 1:30 to 3:30 via email, Zoom, or phone

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 entirely online, with no scheduled lectures. The course involves a major group project and three related group assignments.
- The weekly schedule of topics and readings appears at the end of this outline. Students are responsible for reading and following all guidelines and policies presented in the outline.
- Students will be assigned to one of two marking groups, with either the instructor (andre@ucalgary.ca) or Ms. Christine Sopczak (cmsopcza@ucalgary.ca)

Objectives of the Course. By the end of this course, students should know how to

- approach workplace communication rhetorically, considering not only their purpose in writing but also the needs and expectations of their audience and other relevant features of the writing context, including its ethical dimensions.

- work collaboratively with others in an online environment and effectively use basic workplace genres, including informal and formal reports, proposals, letters, memos, emails, résumés, and instructions.
- design documents and PowerPoint slides using headings, lists, and visuals to make information clear and accessible.
- revise writing for clarity, conciseness, appropriate tone, and well focused paragraphs and edit to eliminate common writing errors.
- conduct secondary research and effectively use and cite information from sources using APA or IEEE documentation style. Depending on the focus of the report assignment, students may also learn how to ethically conduct a usability test or other small-scale study involving an online survey.

Required Textbooks and Readings

Ewald, T. (2020). *Writing in the Technical Fields: A Practical Guide*. 3rd edition. Oxford UP. Approximately \$78 for a hardcopy edition or \$30 for a 6-month digital copy rental via the U of Calgary Bookstore or <https://redshelf.com/search/?terms=Writing+in+the+technical+fields>

The weekly syllabus also includes links to online readings; the links are also provided on D2L.

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>

Instructors may arrange to record synchronous zoom class sessions for lesson capture; however, students are not to share recordings with others. Please carefully review the section on Instructor Copyright at the end of this outline.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignments are due at 11:59 pm on the date indicated.

Assessed Components		Due Thurs.
15%	Revision exercises (3 x 5%). This task has three required parts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise 2.3 (Ewald, 2020, p. 35) OR Exercise 2.4 (p. 36) • Exercise 3.3 (Ewald, 2020, p. 47) • Exercise 4.4 (Ewald, 2020, p. 67). 	Sept. 24
5%	Quiz 1: an open-book multiple-choice editing quiz based on Ewald (2020, Appendix, pp. 281-322) and on editing handouts on D2L. This quiz is to be done individually. It will open at 11:59 pm Sept. 24.	Oct. 1
20%	Memo-report (individual, 3 pages plus appendices). You will assess and recommend improvements to one figure, one table, and one infographic on plastic waste. See the detailed guidelines on D2L.	Oct. 8
15%	Proposal for final project study (group). Working in project groups of 3 or 4, you will submit a 3- or 4-page proposal for your research project, which will culminate in the final report and PPT assignments. See the group project guidelines on D2L.	Oct. 22
5%	Quiz 2: open-book multiple-choice quiz based on the readings for Oct. 8 and on Ewald (2020) Ch. 12. This quiz is to be done individually. It will open at 11:59 pm Oct. 22.	Oct. 29
10%	Participation. Complete any of the following (to earn 10% maximum): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • up to 5 online surveys for other student group projects (2% each). Upload a list of completed surveys to D2L by the due date. • a discussion board posting (4%) in response to Q 14.1, 14.3, or 14.4 from Ewald (2020, p. 261). 	Nov. 6 (Fri.)
25%	Final recommendation report (group). Working in your groups, you will submit a 12- to 15-page recommendation report based on your group's proposed research. See the group project guidelines on D2L.	Nov. 26
5%	PowerPoint (group). Working in your project groups, you will submit an 8- to 10-slide PPT summarizing your group's project research, findings, and recommendations. See the group project guidelines on D2L.	Dec. 3

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: NO

Note: In order to pass this course, you must complete all assignments and quizzes, but you may skip the participation tasks. If you miss a required component, please contact the instructor as soon as possible.

Submission & Return of Assignments

Please submit all assignments electronically by uploading them to the designated D2L dropbox (unless instructed otherwise in the assignment guidelines).

- **Use only .docx or .rtf (or .ppt) file formats** for assignments; **avoid PDF or Pages files.**
- Include your name at the top of page 1 & in the file name (e.g., *363 indiv asst Smith.docx*)
- Submit assignments to the designated D2L drop box. For group assignments, only one group member should submit the assignment. Please do not drop off hard copies to the main office (SS 320) or use the drop box next to it, as it may not be monitored in F2020.
- Note that it is your responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that you submit the proper version. Note also that personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*; for more information, please see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip/foip-hia>
- We aim to return marked assignments in 10 to 14 days. Before completing your next assignment, please review your marked assignments on D2L. Depending on how your marker input comments, you may have to adjust your settings to see the comments; to do this in MS Word, go to *Review* → *Tracking* → *Show Markup*.

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.

Group Assignments

Group Formation. For the proposal, final report, and PowerPoint assignments, students will work in the same groups of 3 or 4. Students will have until noon September 24 to email the instructor with the names of their proposed group members. Students not in a group at that point will be randomly assigned to a group of 3.

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.

Group Grades. 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 peer evaluations administered at the instructor's discretion. (If you would like a peer evaluation for your group, please email the instructor; your name will be kept anonymous.)

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 and 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>

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 (APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.) or to book an appointment with a writing consultant, please visit the Student Success Centre resource links at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/studentsuccess/writing-support>. You might also visit the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

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 & 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. In this course, the revision task, online quizzes, and participation grades will be graded using percentage or numerical grades, and all other assignments will be given letter grades.

Final grades are reported as letter grades. For components graded using percentages, 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.

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%

* 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.

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course content created by the instructor is the instructor's intellectual property. As such, it should not be shared publicly or sold without the instructor's consent. Intellectual property is protected under Canadian copyright laws.

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://lawslois.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.

Research Ethics

The course-based research ethics approval in place for COMS 363 covers only research (e.g., surveys) involving your fellow students in this section of the course. If you propose to do other

research involving 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-andinstructors/ethics>

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal

For university regulations and procedures related to deferrals of exams and course work, requests for reappraisals, and other matters, please see the relevant sections in the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.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.

Please scroll to the next page for the weekly syllabus of course topics, readings, and due dates.

COMS 363 (L01) Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Course Work Fall 2020

Complete readings and assignments before the date indicated.

Thurs	Topics, readings, activities, & work due
Sept. 10	<p>Introduction to technical and professional writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course outline • Ewald (2020), Ch. 1 (pp. 1-16) <p>TO DO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>check your system's compatibility in D2L via My Tools > System Check</i> • <i>email yourself from within D2L to ensure that emails from D2L are not going to a spam folder or to an email account you do not regularly check. To change email settings, go to Communication → News → More actions → Notifications</i> • <i>configure notifications in D2L to specify course updates to be sent to your SMS (message system) or email. To do this, go to Communication → News → More actions → Notifications → Instant Notifications</i>
Sept. 17	<p>Writing letters, emails, & memos; developing an effective writing style</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ewald (2020), Ch. 5 (pp. 69-80) and Ch. 2 (pp. 21-33) <p>TO DO BY SEPT. 24: <i>If you wish, you may form a project group of 3 or 4 students using the group formation tool under the Communication tab in D2L. (The class list is under the D2L Communication tab.) On September 25, remaining students will be assigned randomly to groups.</i></p>
Sept. 24	<p>Effective paragraphs, parallelism, lists, headings, & layout</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ewald (2020), Ch. 3 (pp. 37-45) and Ch. 4 (pp. 48-65) <p>DUE by 11:59 pm: *Revision exercises (15%: 3 x 5%). Please submit this work in a single file with your name at the top of page 1 and in the file name.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise 2.3 (Ewald, 2020, p. 35) OR Exercise 2.4 (p. 36) • Exercise 3.3 (Ewald, 2020, p. 47) • Exercise 4.4 (Ewald, 2020, p. 67).
Oct. 1	<p>Writing collaboratively; editing for common errors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ewald (2020), Ch. 8 (pp. 150-163) and Appendix (pp. 281-322) • Editing handouts (posted under <i>Content</i> → <i>Editing</i> on D2L) <p>DUE by 11:59 pm: Quiz 1 (5%): an untimed open-book quiz based on this week's readings. This quiz is to be done individually. It will become available at 11:59 pm Sept. 24. Access quizzes under the D2L Assessment tab.</p> <p>TO DO BEFORE OCT. 8: <i>Check in with your project group, review the proposal assignment guidelines, and think about the topic for your group proposal.</i></p>

<p>Oct. 8</p>	<p>Designing visuals; writing short reports and proposals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual memo report assignment guidelines in <i>Assignment Guidelines Part 1</i> • Ewald (2020), Ch. 6 (pp. 85-112) and Ch. 10 (pp.182-200) • Few, S. (2007). Save the pies for dessert. https://www.perceptualedge.com/articles/visual_business_intelligence/save_the_pies_for_dessert.pdf • North Carolina State University (NCSU). (2004). <i>LabWrite Resources</i>. https://labwrite.ncsu.edu/res/res-homepage.htm [scan this resource] • As needed, refer to sources on APA style listed below for Oct. 22 readings. <p>DUE: Individual memo-report (20%). In this short report formatted as a memo (3 pp plus appendices) and using APA style for source documentation, you will assess and recommend improvements for one figure, one table, and one infographic on plastic waste. See the detailed guidelines posted on D2L.</p>
<p>Oct. 15</p>	<p>Writing proposals & designing surveys</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal & Report assignment guidelines on D2L • SurveyMonkey. (2019). 10 Best Practices for Creating Effective Surveys. https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/surveyguidelines/?ut_source=header <p><i>TO DO: work on your group proposal; it is due next week</i></p>
<p>Oct. 22</p>	<p>Citing sources in APA or IEE style</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ewald (2020), Ch. 9 (pp. 165 - 180) • Using & citing sources in APA style (PowerPoint posted on D2L) • Purdue Online Writing Lab. (2020). <i>APA Formatting and Style Guide (7th ed.)</i>. https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html [for reference; link will be on D2L] • Murdoch University. (2019). <i>IEEE Referencing Guide</i>. https://libguides.murdoch.edu.au/IEEE/text [for reference; link will be on D2L] <p>DUE: Proposal for final project study (group). Working in project groups of 3 or 4, you will submit a 3- or 4-page proposal for your research project, which will culminate in the final report and PPT assignments.</p>
<p>Oct. 29</p>	<p>Writing instructions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ewald (2020), Ch. 12. (pp. 220-235) <p>DUE: Quiz 2: an open-book multiple-choice untimed quiz based on Ewald (2020) Ch. 12 and on the readings for Oct. 8. This quiz is to be done individually. It will open at 11:59 pm Oct. 22.</p> <p><i>TO DO: Once your proposal is returned, make any needed revisions to your online survey and distribute it to the class via D2L. Students have only until Nov. 6 to complete surveys so that groups have survey results well before the report is due.</i></p>

<p>Nov. 6 (Fri.)</p>	<p>Ethics in technical writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ewald (2020), Ch. 14 (pp. 256 - 260) • Hamlin et al. (n.d.), Ch. 10 (Ethics in technical writing). https://coccoer.pressbooks.com/chapter/ethics-in-technical-writing/ <p>DUE: Participation tasks: Complete any of the following to earn 10% maximum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • up to 5 online surveys for other student group projects (2% each). Upload a list of completed surveys to D2L by Nov. 10. • a discussion board posting (4%) in response to Q 14.1, 14.3, or 14.4 from Ewald (2020, p. 261)
<p>Nov. 8-14 Term break</p>	
<p>Nov. 19</p>	<p>Writing Formal Reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ewald (2020), Ch. 7 (pp. 118 – 147) • Final report assignment guidelines • Report writing checklist (posted at the top of the Readings list on D2L)
<p>Nov. 26</p>	<p>Work on your final report for this week (no assigned readings)</p> <p>DUE: Final recommendation report (group) (25%). Working in your project groups, you will submit a 12- to 15-page recommendation report based on your group's proposed research. See the detailed guidelines on D2L</p>
<p>Dec. 3</p>	<p>Oral Presentations & PPT Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ewald (2020), Ch. 13 (pp. 239 - 254) • Brent, D., & Andre, J. (2011). Using PowerPoint Intelligently [PPT on D2L] <p>DUE: PowerPoint (group) (5%). Working in your project groups, you will submit an 8- to 10-slide PPT summarizing your final report research problem, findings, and recommendations. See D2L for the detailed guidelines.</p>