

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

COMS 363 (L02): Professional and Technical Communication

SPRING 2020: May 6 to June 17 (excluding May 18)

Online Course (no lectures or labs)

Instructor: Dr. Michele Braun

Office: Online

Email: braunmd@ucalgary.ca

Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal

Office Hours: Office hours are online by email or video conference on request

Course Description

COMS 363 is an introductory course in professional and technical communication. The course emphasizes the rhetorical dimensions and distinct organizational and socio-cultural contexts of the workplace. In the course students will gain knowledge of and apply best practices in planning, researching, composing, and delivering professional and technical communications materials for various audiences. Through individual and group writing assignments students will learn concepts and skills enabling them to assess and respond in various workplace writing situations.

Additional Information

This course is delivered entirely online on D2L via myUofC. The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found at the end of this outline or on D2L. Students are encouraged to check D2L and their @ucalgary email regularly for course updates and information.

Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline. Students should expect to spend 5-6 hours a week on coursework, including assigned group work.

Objectives of the Course

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Approach workplace communication rhetorically, focusing not only on their purpose in writing but also on the needs and expectations of their audience and considering the ethical dimensions and other relevant features of the writing context
- format basic workplace genres, including formal and informal reports, proposals, letters, memos, emails, and, optionally, instructions, technical descriptions, and websites
- design effective print and online documents, using headings, lists, well-crafted paragraphs, and white space;
- effectively use, design, and present figures and tables;
- conduct research (locating relevant and reliable sources using library search tools online)
- effectively use and correctly cite information from sources using a citation style appropriate to the course audience (APA or IEEE style)

Textbooks and Readings

Last, S. (2019). Technical writing essentials. Victoria BC: University of Victoria. Retrieved from <https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/technicalwriting/#main>

Policy on the use of Electronic Communication Devices

Course technologies usually work with all the major browsers (i.e. Firefox, Internet Explorer, Chrome, Safari) and operating systems (Mac, Windows, etc). However, compatibility problems may occur with outdated browsers, plugins or apps, and usability issues may occur on mobile devices.

Before the course begins, please

- check your system's compatibility in D2L via My Tools > System Check
- send an email to yourself from within D2L to ensure that emails from D2L are not being directed to a spam folder or going to an account not linked to D2L.

For information on campus WiFi, computer labs, Office 365, eLearning tools, and IT help go to: https://ucalgary.service-now.com/it?id=kb_article&sys_id=86e7438013753ac06f3afbb2e144b031

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
15 %	Reading quizzes (5 x 3% each): Quizzes will be posted on D2L and must be completed by midnight the Wednesday of the week for which they are due; quizzes will test the student's knowledge of the week's (and/or previous week's) assigned reading.	Midnight on: May 13; May 20; May 27; June 3; June 10
15%	Online activities and discussions: Activities and discussion posts must be completed by the Friday of the week for which they are due; discussions may consist of both posts and responses, in which case there may be a deadline earlier in the week for the posting	Midnight on: May 8; May 15; May 22; May 29; June 5
20 %	Proposal: 4-5 page document outlining proposed recommendation report project; includes problem statement, rationale, preliminary research, timeline and proposed report outline	Midnight on May 22
10 %	Instruction set: 3-4 page set of instructions that uses illustrations and document design principles to clearly describe how to complete a task or perform and action	Midnight on May 29
30 %	Recommendation report: 15-20 page report recommending a solution to the problem identified in the proposal; includes all required elements in correct order (see assignment sheet) and clear conclusion and recommendation	Midnight Jun 12
10 %	Presentation: A presentation of the recommendation created in the report is required; students are required to create either a webpage or a PowerPoint presentation complete with speaking notes	Midnight June 17

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: NO

Note: You must complete all assignments and exams or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

If you miss a required course component, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

Submission of Assignments

All assignments for the course will be uploaded to the D2L dropbox for the course before the indicated deadline. Acceptable formats are .doc, .docx, and .pdf. Please include your name and ID number on all assignments and format the file name of all documents uploaded to D2L as: Last name_Assignment title_Term. **Note:** It is your responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that you submit the proper version (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission).

Private information related to individual students is treated with the utmost regard by University of Calgary faculty. Student assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty, and personal information is collected in accordance with the ***Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act***. Please note that instructors may use audio or video recorded for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss a partial letter grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late. Assignments that are late because of technical difficulties that you as the end user experience will be considered late; it is a good idea to give yourself time to manage any technology problems that may arise.

You have one free pass for one late assignment during the term for which you will not be penalized the late penalty, but only one. After that late assignment free pass is used, all other assignments will be docked regardless of the reason for the late assignment. The late pass cannot be applied to tests or quizzes and the assignment for which it is used must be submitted before the last day the class meets during the semester. Assignments for which the late pass is used will receive a grade but no comments.

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 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>

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

In this course, letter grades will be assigned for all completed work and will be recorded on D2L.

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%

* Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: 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. 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 (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre resource links at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student->

[success/writing-support](#) or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, please consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, 3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success?utm_source=ssc&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=redirect

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

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://laws-lois.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.

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, 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-and-instructors/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-reggs.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.

For resources on D2L, visit <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students>. IT support is available at itsupport@ucalgary.ca or by calling 403-220.5555.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

A copy of the weekly syllabus will be posted on D2L.