

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film
COMS 363 (L04): Professional and Technical Communication
Spring 2022: ONLINE (entirely asynchronous)
May 4 to June 16 (excluding May 23)

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR ONLINE COURSE DELIVERY

Timed Online Quizzes/Tests: You will be allowed a minimum window of 24 hours to access online quizzes and exams, but there may be a time limit for completing a quiz once you open it. Read the description carefully.

Timed Final Exams: You will be allowed a minimum window of 24 hours to access online final exams, but there may be a time limit for completing the final exam once you open it. Read the description carefully. Timed final exams allow for an additional 50% extra time.

Instructor:	Andrea Hanslip
Office:	N/A
Email:	arhansli@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	<i>Mondays 10:30-11:30am and Thursdays 7-8pm</i>

Course Description

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 is a fully online course with no scheduled class meetings or synchronous components (except for scheduled office hour appointments).

- In lieu of lectures, there are course videos that students are expected to watch.
- The course involves a major group project and three related group assignments.
- Because our timeline for the course is shorter than it would be in either the Fall or Winter semesters, the pace is more intense. Note that the first few weeks contain a lot of reading and that at least one assignment/task is due each week.
- To do well in this course, schedule at least 12 hours a week to complete readings and work on assignments.
- The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found at the end of this outline or on D2L.
- Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.

Before the course begins, please do the following to ensure that you get all course updates:

1. Email yourself from D2L and check that your sent email appears in your inbox.

2. Update your notification settings in D2L. To do so,
 - 1) Click on your name on the top right-hand corner of the course page on D2L.
 - 2) Click on NOTIFICATIONS in the drop-down menu that appears.
 - 3) In the Notifications area, change your email to an email you check frequently if you did not receive the email you sent to yourself in step 1.
 - 4) Click the following options to ensure that you receive course news postings and reminders either by email or instant messaging:
 - News – item updated
 - News – new item available
 - Quizzes – quiz due date or end date is 2 days away
 - 5) Click SAVE.

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.

Textbooks and Readings

Required textbook: Ewald, T. (2020). *Writing in the Technical Fields: A Practical Guide*, 3rd edition. Oxford UP. (Earlier editions of the textbook are not acceptable)

- The book is available as a hard copy or as an e-book rental through the Bookstore.

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

On the D2L site, you will also find detailed assignment guidelines and links to other course resources.

Learning Technologies and Requirements

In order to complete 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), and a microphone and speaker (built-in or external) or headset with microphone (for online synchronous courses only).

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 IT support services. See <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/student-campus-services-information-technologies-it.html>

Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices

Please familiarize yourself with the University’s policy on the recording of lectures, which is outlined at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html>, and carefully review the section on Instructor Copyright at the end of this outline.

Assignments and Evaluation

Please see Content: Assignment Instructions on D2L.

Note that all assignments are due at 11:59 pm on the date indicated.

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
10%	Revision Task (individual) Revising sentences, paragraphs, short documents for conciseness, coherence, design, and clarity; handout under Content: Assignment Instructions in D2L	Tuesday, May 10
15%	Visual critique memo-email (individual) Short memo-email critiquing tables, graphs, and other visuals in an assigned report; instructions under Content: Assignment Instructions in D2L	Tuesday, May 17
15%	Proposal for usability study (with group contract) (3 to 4 pages, done in project groups of 4). This is the first of 3 assignments comprising the Group Project. This proposal will include an overview of the website chosen for analysis, a description of your research method, an overview of your evaluation criteria, 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); instructions for the Group Project under Content: Assignment Instructions in D2L	Tuesday, May 24
5%	Quiz 1 on D2L: Editing quiz (individual) based on Ewald Appendix, editing handouts and videos on D2L (20 questions, multiple choice, open book). Quiz will open May 20.	Friday, May 27
20%	Heuristic evaluation memo report (2-3 pages, single-spaced, individual) Each member of your project group will submit an individual heuristic analysis of your target website focusing on an assigned criterion for analysis (as indicated in your group contract). Instructions under Content: Assignment Instructions in D2L	Tuesday, May 31
5%	Quiz 2 on D2L: based on Ewald Ch. 11 & 12, Using PPT Intelligently (multiple choice, 20 questions, open book). Quiz will open May 27.	Friday, June 3
6%	PowerPoint (10-14 slides, group). This PowerPoint is based on your research project and will summarize research, findings, and recommendations. It will be collaboratively crafted by all group members. Instructions for the Group Project are under Content: Assignment Instructions in D2L	Friday, June 10

24%	Final recommendation report (group). 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. Instructions for the Group Project are under Content: Assignment Instructions in D2L.	Tuesday, June 14
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Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: You must complete all assignments worth more than 5% in order to pass the course. If you miss a required course component, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

Submission of Assignments

Please submit all assignments electronically by uploading them to the designated D2L dropbox (unless instructed otherwise in the assignment guidelines). **Please only submit .docx (or .pptx) file formats for assignments.** You may also submit a PDF if you are concerned about document appearance/formatting if you are converting from something like Google Docs.

- Include your name at the top of page 1 and in the file name (e.g., *Collins Chu Malor Proposal.docx*) for all assignments.
- For group assignments, please have only one group member submit group assignments to the group dropboxes. Marked assignments submitted to a group dropbox will be accessible for review by all group members.
- If you encounter difficulty submitting through D2L, please email the assignment to the instructor with "COMS 363 Temporary Submission" in the subject line. As soon as D2L becomes available, please resubmit the assignment in the designated drop box and leave a note in the comment box, indicating that you've submitted earlier by email to avoid late penalties.
- 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 of 5% or a partial letter grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Group Assignments

For the Usability Study project and assignments, students will work in the same groups of 4. Students will have until 11:59pm Tuesday, May 10 to form their own groups of 4 by using the group formation tool in D2L; students not in groups by then will be randomly assigned to groups. (Watch D2L for more information on this.)

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.)

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. For the full policy on Student Accommodations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-accommodation-policy>

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 a medical note. For information on the use of a statutory declaration, see the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>

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

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, consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support>

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including lectures, 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.

To ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes & electronic versions of textbooks), all students are required to read the *University of Calgary Policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright* at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use->

[material-protected-copyright-policy](#) and the requirements of the *Copyright Act* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>). 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>

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*.

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal

For university regulations and procedures related to deferral of term work, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

For information about deferrals of final examinations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>

For information about requesting a reappraisal of course work or of a final grade, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

Student Support Services and Resources

Please see <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, Zoom, Yuja, etc., see <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/resources-for-students/>. (Find the topic menu under the icon to the left of the ELEARN banner.)

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

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Course Work Spring 2022

Please enter due dates in your calendar and complete all readings during the specified week. After reading chapters from Ewald, review the corresponding chapter PPTs (on D2L)

Week	Topics, Readings, Activities	Work Due
May 4-8	<p>Introduction to course</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read course outline (posted on D2L) • Watch Welcome video in D2L • Read about group formation in course outline; choose group project partners (optional) in D2L Groups area (see the class list under Communication to see other students in the course) • Configure D2L settings to ensure you are getting course announcements and course notifications and are receiving emails <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check your system's compatibility in D2L via My Tools→System Check • Email yourself from within D2L to ensure emails from D2L are not going to a spam folder or to an email account you don't regularly check. To change email settings, go to Communication →News →More actions →Notifications • Configure notifications in D2L to specify course updates be sent to your SMS (message system) or email. To do this, go to Communication →News →More actions →Notifications Instant Notifications <p>Introduction to technical and professional writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Ewald, Ch. 1 (pp. 1-20) <p>Effective revising for sentences, paragraphs, & parallelism: preparing for Revision Task</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Ewald, Ch. 2, 3, & 4 (pp. 21-68) • Quickly look over Ewald, Appendix: Grammar and Usage Handbook (pp. 281-322) • Watch Revising video in D2L • Begin Revision Task worksheet (under Assignments on D2L) 	
May 9-15	<p>Writing correspondence and short reports: preparing for Visual Critique memo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Ewald, Ch. 5 (pp. 69-80): Routine Correspondence • Read Assignment guidelines (posted on D2L under Assignments) for visual critique memo • Watch Visual Critique video • Draft & revise visual critique: use instructions as a checklist <p>Designing and using visuals: preparing for Visual Critique memo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Few, S. (2007). Save the pies for dessert. https://www.perceptualedge.com/articles/visual_business_intelligence/save_the_pies_for_dessert.pdf • Read Ewald, Ch. 10 (pp. 182-200) Technical Graphics • Look through the various pages in the Graphing Resources section here: North Carolina State University (NCSU). (2004). LabWrite Resources. http://labwrite.ncsu.edu/res/res-homepage.htm 	<p>Tuesday, May 10 Revision Task worksheet: submit to Dropbox in D2L</p> <p>Tuesday, May 10 Last day to self-select group members for group project</p>

	<p>Working in project groups and choosing a topic: preparing for Proposal, PPT and Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Ewald, Ch. 8 (pp. 150-64) Intercultural Communication, Collaborative Writing, and Document Control • Look at sample proposal and reports on D2L (Content area) • Read Group Project Guidelines (under Assignments in D2L) • Email your group (all students will be assigned to a group by May 12) • Agree on a website to evaluate • Read Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, Harvard University. (2020). <i>Group work</i>. https://bokcenter.harvard.edu/group-work 	
May 16-22	<p>Writing proposals & working in project groups: preparing for Proposal, PPT and Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read sample proposal in D2L • Watch Proposal video in D2L • Discuss group roles, and assign parts of the project to group members • Write group contract • Decide on your citation style: APA or IEEE • Draft proposal & revise (use Ewald Ch. 1 + Report-Writing Checklist) <p>Using and citing sources (in IEEE and APA styles)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read materials appropriate to your chosen citation style <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ewald, Ch. 9 (pp. 165-178) ○ Purdue Online Writing Lab. (202). <i>IEEE overview</i>. https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/ieee_style/ieee_overview.html ○ Murdoch University. (2019). <i>IEEE – Referencing guide: IEEE style</i>. https://libguides.murdoch.edu.au/IEEE/home ○ American Psychological Association. (2021). <i>Style and grammar guidelines</i>. APA Style. https://apastyle.apa.org ○ Purdue Online Writing Lab. (2020). <i>APA formatting and style guide (7th edition)</i>. https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html • Watch citation videos in D2L <p>Designing surveys and usability tests: preparing for Proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Jerz, D. (2010). <i>Usability testing: 8 quick tips for designing tests</i>. http://jerz.setonhill.edu/design/usability/tips.htm • Read U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. (2020). <i>Usability evaluation basics</i>. https://www.usability.gov/what-and-why/usability-evaluation.html • Read U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. (2020). <i>Online surveys</i>. https://www.usability.gov/how-to-and-tools/methods/online-surveys.html • Read SurveyMonkey. (2020). <i>Surveys 101</i>. https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/survey-guidelines/?ut_source=header (and check out the links at the bottom of the page; recommended: The 	<p>Tuesday, May 17 Visual Critique (individual assignment): submit to Dropbox</p>

	<p>Likert Scale Explained, Qualitative vs. Quantitative Questions, Survey Programming and Design, A Great Survey is Like a Great Conversation. Here's What We Mean!, A Little Bias is a Big Problem)</p> <p>Designing Effective Websites & Assessing Aspects of Usability: preparing for Proposal (deciding on criteria for evaluation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Garrett, J. J. (2000). The elements of user experience. http://www.jig.net/elements/pdf/elements.pdf • Scan Table of Contents in Lynch, P. J. & Horton, S. (2009). Web style guide, 3rd edition. https://webstyleguide.com/wsg3/index.html • Scan Table of Contents in Lynch, P. J. & Horton, S. (2016). Web style guide, 4th edition. https://webstyleguide.com 	
May 24-30	<p>Editing for common errors: preparing for Editing Task</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Ewald, Appendix: Grammar and Usage Handbook (pp. 281-322) • Read Editing handouts (under Content on D2L) • Watch Editing videos in D2L <p>Writing short reports: preparing for Heuristic Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Ewald, Ch. 6 (pp. 85-112) Short Reports, Proposals, and Technical Documents • Read Heuristic Evaluation instructions • Watch Heuristic Evaluation video in D2L • Draft Heuristic Evaluation & revise (use Ewald Ch. 1 + Report-Writing Checklist) 	<p>Tuesday, May 24 Proposal (group assignment, including group contract as appendix): submit to Dropbox in D2L</p> <p>Friday, May 29 Quiz 1 due</p>
May 31-June 6	<p>Other technical genres: preparing for Quiz 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Ewald, Ch. 11 (pp. 201-219) Technical Definitions and Descriptions • Read Ewald, Ch. 12 (pp. 220-238) Instructions, Procedure, and Manuals • Take Quiz 2 <p>Conducting primary research, continuing group project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look over comments on marked proposal when received • Release your survey this week after making any changes necessary • Please take surveys from other groups if you want to help them out • Begin to draft sections of report <p>Crafting presentations and PowerPoint slides: preparing for PPT; preparing for Quiz 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Ewald, Ch. 13 (pp. 239-249, p. 253-4) Oral Presentations • Read Brent, D., & Andre, J. (2011). Using PowerPoint Intelligently [PPT on D2L] • Read PowerPoint assignment guidelines (on D2L) • Watch PPT video in D2L • Take Quiz 2 	<p>Tuesday, May 31 Heuristic Evaluation (individual assignment): submit to Dropbox in D2L</p> <p>Friday, June 3 Quiz 2 due</p>

<p>June 7-13</p>	<p>Writing formal reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Ewald, Ch. 7 (p. 118- 149) Formal Reports • Read Report-writing Checklist • Review Report assignment guidelines (on D2L) • Watch Report video in D2L <p>Continuing group project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile results from surveys • Combine survey results with heuristic evaluation results • Write and revise all sections of report (use comments on returned heuristic evaluations to help with revision/editing) • Design visuals for report and PPT • Compile PPT and revise, edit & proofread carefully 	<p>Friday, June 10 PowerPoint (group assignment): submit to Dropbox in D2L</p>
<p>June 14-16</p>	<p>Continuing group project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final revision/editing of report (use Ewald Ch. 1 + Report-Writing Checklist) 	<p>Tuesday, June 14 Final Recommendation Report (group assignment): submit to Dropbox in D2L</p>