University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film
COMS 363 (L06): Professional and Technical Communication
SPRING 2023: May 3 to June 15 (excluding May 22)
Asynchronous Online Course (no synchronous lectures or labs)

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR ONLINE COURSE DELIVERY

Timed Online Quizzes and Exams: 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. The time specified for any timed online assessments includes 50% extra time.

Instructor:	Dr. Linda Vennard
Email:	vennard@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	Mondays 9:00-11:00 am, and Zoom meetings by appointment

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 course is delivered entirely online, with no scheduled lectures.

Students are encouraged to attend the Instructor's scheduled weekly virtual office hours via Zoom to discuss any aspect of the course, such as readings and assignments.

The weekly schedule of Assigned Reading Chapters can be found at the end of this outline and on D2L. Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline. The course involves some group work.

The timeline for this course is shorter than Fall or Winter sessions and the pace is faster. Note that the first few weeks of the course are reading intensive so you can get a firm grasp on the content and apply it to course projects.

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.

- Structure information, format and produce basic workplace document genres, including formal and informal reports, proposals, letters, memos, emails, résumés, instructions, technical descriptions and, optionally, websites.

- Write and design effective print and online documents, using headings, lists, well-crafted paragraphs, and white space.

- Effectively use, design, and present figures and tables.

- Conduct secondary research (locating relevant sources using the U of C library search tools online).

- Effectively use and correctly cite information from sources using a citation style appropriate to the course audience, ideally APA and/or IEEE style.

- Edit documents to eliminate common writing errors.

- Work effectively in a small group.

Textbooks and Readings

Required Textbook:
Meyer, C. (2020). *Communicating for Results*. 5th edition. Don Mills: Oxford University Press. Both print and digital formats are available through the University of Calgary Bookstore.

Additional Online References

American Psychological Association. (2020). Style and grammar guidelines. APA Style. https://apastyle.apa.org

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

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

Instructors may arrange to record synchronous zoom class sessions for lesson capture; however, students are not to share recordings with others.

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.

Email Policy

To help support the timely response of course-related email, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Email to the Instructor must include COMS 363 and your Section Number in the subject line, and your name as it appears in D2L.
- Email should be used for short inquiries specific to you and/or your group. Whenever possible, students are asked to post questions to D2L Discussions so others may view and benefit from the Instructor's responses to your questions and comments.
- By default, D2L uses the email address associated with your UofC ID. I strongly recommend you use your UofC email address for this course.
- Students are responsible for ensuring they receive course email notifications and messages from the Instructor (which will be done through D2L), as well as messages and notifications from colleagues (also expected to be done through D2L).
- I strongly recommend you send an email to yourself through D2L to make sure there are no issues you need to deal with prior to the commencement of the course.
- The Instructor will make every effort to respond to emails in a timely fashion, usually within 24 hours. Weekends may take longer.

Policy on AI Generated Answers and Material

- Answers and responses to all assignments are to be human-produced by the student registered in the course.
- AI generated answers, responses and material are not acceptable in this course and attempts to pass them off as a student's own will be considered academic misconduct.
- Any answers, responses or material suspected to be AI generated will be referred to the appropriate University of Calgary authorities for investigation of academic misconduct.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
15%	**Two (2) Short Writing Assignments:** The Short Writing Assignments are designed for students to demonstrate written mastery of concepts in the corresponding or past assigned reading chapters for the weeks (see Assigned Reading Schedule). - Each Short Writing Assignment contains two (2) to five (5) exercises, with each exercise requiring a written response from a few sentences to	11:59 pm on Fridays: #1 May 12 #2 June 2

	maximum 1 page in length. • Assignments will be available on D2L for one week from 8:00 a.m. on Fridays and are due the next Friday at 11:59 p.m. Students will complete Short Writing Assignment #1 <u>individually</u> (worth 10%) (due May 12 at 11:59 pm). Students may <u>individually</u> complete Short Writing Assignment #2 (worth 5%), <u>or work collaboratively</u> with 1-2 other students (due June 2 at 11:59 pm). Full details are provided on D2L.	
5%	**Presentation: Grammar and Punctuation Presentation – Narrated Powerpoint** Students will select from a list of grammar and punctuation topics provided and prepare and deliver a maximum two (2) minute narrated PowerPoint presentation. Presentations will be posted to D2L so other students may view and learn from them. The list of topics provided will be derived from Chapters 4 (Business Style: Word Choice, Conciseness and Tone) and Chapter 5 (Business Style: Sentences and Paragraphs). The presentation is to be in the form and style presented in Chapter 13 (Oral Communication). Topic selection and sign-up will be completed by the end of the first week, i.e. Friday, May 5. Full details of the Grammar and Punctuation Presentation – Narrated PPT are provided on D2L.	Due Friday, May 19 at 11:59 pm
15 %	**Resume and Cover Letter (Individual):** A Resume is an important element of the business world and introduces you professionally, along with your education, experience and qualifications for a position. You can expect to prepare many in your career. For this Assignment you will prepare a professional 'master' resume for yourself. • Students will prepare their own Resume (3-5 double-spaced pages) in the form and style presented in Chapter 11 (Communicating for Employment), plus Cover Letter (1 page), and a short (maximum 1/2 page) critique of their online presence. • Students will demonstrate their skill and mastery of all professional writing material covered in the course to that point. Full details are provided on D2L.	May 19 at 11:59 pm
25 %	**Midterm Test (Individual):** The Midterm is administered online through D2L. The Midterm Test: • is open book • covers chapters 1-14 inclusive.	May 27 Test opens at 8:00 am May 23, closes at 11:59 pm

	• contains 50 multiple choice questions	May 26
	• will be opened 2 days in advance (i.e., at 8:00 am on Tues May 23) and will close one day after the due date (i.e. at 11:59 pm May 26)	
	• is timed, and once opened must be completed. Students will have 2.5 hours to complete the Midterm Test (the 2.5 hours includes the 50% additional writing time to accommodate for unforeseen technical difficulties)	
	• Please allow yourself distraction free time to complete the Midterm. If unforeseen circumstances arise after you have started the Test which impact your ability to complete it within the specified time, please contact the Instructor as soon as possible to arrange for an alternate time to write the Test.	
	• On each day the Midterm Test is available I will closely monitor my email between 9:00 am and noon, and 2:00 -4:00 pm to answer questions about the test, so you may wish to schedule your writing to overlap with those times. Students choosing to write in the evening are encouraged to notify me and I will monitor my email then as well.	
	• All students are required to work on their own to do the Midterm Test.	
	Full details are provided on D2L.	

Group Project (total 40 %)

10 %	**Formal Proposal (Group Project):**	
	Students will work in self-selected groups of four (4) to produce a Formal Recommendation Report (see below). A Formal Proposal is the first step in the process.	May 26 at 11:59 pm
	• Each Group will prepare a Formal Proposal three (3) to four (4) double-spaced pages in length in the form and based on material in Chapter 12 (Proposals and Formal Reports).	
	• The Proposal will outline the Group's objectives for their Formal Recommendation Report, provide their Research Plan (a table outlining individual research areas and comparison points) and their Work Plan (a table outlining key responsibilities of each team member and any associated deadlines).	
	• Secondary research is required to complete both the Proposal and Formal Recommendation Report. No research with people is permitted.	
	• Groups will be formed by the end of the second week, i.e. by Friday, May 12. (self-enrollment until Friday May 12 at 11:59 pm, automatic D2L enrollment after that)	
	Full details of the Group Project are provided on D2L.	

30 %	**Formal Recommendation Report (Group Project):**
	
	As outlined above, Students will work in groups of four (4) to produce a Formal Recommendation Report in the form and style set out in Chapter 12 (Proposals and Formal Reports). The Formal Recommendation Report will be based and build on the Formal Proposal.
	
	    • The body of the Formal Recommendation Report will be 8-10 double-spaced pages in length, plus the 'Front Matter' and 'Back Matter' described in Chapter 12.
	
	    • Will require secondary research. No research with people is permitted.
	
	 Full details of the Group Project are provided on D2L.
	
	Group members will receive the same grade on assignments; however, the instructor reserves the right to award differential grades based on group peer reviews or information indicating significantly uneven contributions by group members.
		June 15 at 11:59 pm

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: You do not have to complete all the assignments and exams in order to receive a passing grade in this course.

Submission of Assignments

Please submit all assignments electronically by uploading them to the designated D2L dropbox. Include your name and ID number on all assignments. Be sure to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to submit the proper version.
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.

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

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors.

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, percentage grades will be used for all assignments.

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, A.I. content generators, or visual media.

Students must adhere to the instructor's course policy regarding the use of A.I. generated content in course work. Unsanctioned use of A.I. generated content in course work may be reported as academic misconduct.

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://success.ucalgary.ca/home.htm

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 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.)

Schedule of Readings and Assignment Due Dates

Week	Assigned Reading Chapters	Assignments	Due Dates
1	May 3 - 5 **Theme 1: Introduction to the Course and Content** **Theme 2: Writing in a Professional and Technical Context** Assigned Reading Chapters: • Chapter 1: Issues and Trends in Professional Communication • Chapter 2: Getting the Message Across • Chapter 3: Getting Started: Planning, Writing and Revising Business Messages • Chapter 4: Business Style: Word Choice, Conciseness and Tone • Chapter 5: Business Style: Sentences and Paragraphs	Sign-up for Narrated PPT Presentation	Friday May 5 at 11:59 pm

	• Chapter 13: Oral Communication		
2	May 8 - 12 **Theme 3: Structuring Messages in the Professional and Technical Context** Assigned Reading Chapters: • Chapter 6: Memorandums, E-mail and Routine Messages • Chapter 7: Routine and Goodwill Messages • Chapter 8: Delivering Unfavorable News • Chapter 9: Persuasive Messages	Groups formed for Group Project (self-enrollment until Friday May 12 at 11:59 pm, automatic D2L enrollment after that) *Short Writing Assignment #1* (10%) due (Individual)	Friday, May 12 at 11:59 pm
3	May 15 - 19 **Theme 4: Presenting Yourself Professionally for Employment** Assigned Reading Chapters: • Chapter 10**:** Communicating for Employment • Chapter 14: Social Media and Mobile Communications **Theme 5: Structuring, Organizing and Communicating Complex Information** Assigned Reading Chapters: • Chapter 11: Informal Report • Chapter 12: Proposals and Formal Reports	*Narrated PPT Presentation (5%) due* *Resume Project* (15%) due	Friday, May 19 at 11:59 pm Friday, May 19 at 11:59 pm
4	May 23* - 26 **Midterm Test (25%)** No new assigned readings.	***Midterm Test** (25%) covers Chapters 1-14 inclusive * timed for 2.5 hours to complete; once opened must be completed;	Thurs, May 25 Test opens at 8:00 am on Tues May 23, closes on Friday May 26 at 11:59 pm

		Formal Proposal (for Group Project) (10%) due	Friday, May 26 at 11:59 pm
5	May 29 – June 2 **Theme 6: Practical Application: Professional Writing – Key Section Review** Recommended Chapter Review: - Chapter 1: Issues and Trends in Professional Communication (note 'Teamwork' section p.20-26) - Chapter 3: Getting Started: Planning, Writing and Revising Business Messages (note 'Steps in the Writing Process p.83, and 'Collaborative Writing' p.107) - Chapter 4: Business Style: Word Choice, Conciseness and Tone - Chapter 5: Business Style: Sentences and Paragraphs	*Short Writing Assignment* #2 due (5%) (Individual or Collaborative)	Friday, June 2 at 11:59 pm
6	June 5 - 9 **Theme 7: Practical Application: Professional Report Writing – Key Section Review** Recommended Chapter Review: Chapter 12: Proposals and Formal Reports		
7	June 12 - 15 **Course ends Thursday June 15, 2023.**	*Formal Recommendation Report* (30%) due (Group Project)	Thursday, June 15, 2023 at 11:59 pm