

Communications Studies 463 - Lecture 01
Rhetoric & Professional Communication
Fall 2011
Lec MW 12:00 - 12:50
Lab MW 13:00 – 13:50

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Office Hours: M W 16:30-18:00 and by appointment

Additional information

The course involves learning and using communication technology, working in teams, and being involved in a real community-based "service-learning" project involving the development of online communication content. See "Textbooks and Readings" for additional technology and software requirements.

Course description

Theory and criticism of professional communication using rhetorical and social-cultural perspectives. Students will critique samples of professional communication arising from organizational contexts in a variety of media and genres. The course may also incorporate some degree of experiential learning and professional communication practice.

Objectives of the course

- To understand socio-cultural and rhetorical perspectives on professional communication, especially communication in the online environment
- To apply course theories and readings to the criticism and production of professional discourse
- To learn the specific technologies and skills needed to collaboratively construct effective online professional communication for organizations and communities

Textbooks and Readings

Required Textbooks: The most up-to-date sources on online content development are freely available online, not in print format. The instructor will designate specific chapters or sections of the following texts to be associated with each module or assignment. Students will not be required to print out readings.

1. Barr, C. et. al., Eds. (2010). Yahoo! Style Guide. Yahoo.com. (Online resources only, no book purchase required) <http://styleguide.yahoo.com/>
2. Lynch, P. J. & Horton, S. (2009). *Web Style Guide*. 3rd Edition. Retrieved from <http://webstyleguide.com/wsg3/index.html>

Additional readings: TBA: Additional readings will be made available free of charge to students within the

password-protected course website in accordance with U of C copyright policies.

Recommended reference for practicing professional writers in Canada: The Canadian Press Stylebook <http://www.thecanadianpress.com/books.aspx?id=182> has advice for journalists, web content developers, editors, corporate communicators, etc. This resource will provide additional guidance and alternative explanations of principles.

Software: Microsoft Office 2007-2010 software is highly recommended to prevent file incompatibility issues among team members (docx file types). Students can obtain Microsoft Office 2010 as a free trial or purchase it for a highly discounted price--see the "U of C Student Laptop & Software Purchase Program" at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/it/studentlaptops> . Alternatively, you may be able to download a free time-limited trial version from Microsoft.

Online technologies: Free accounts with several online applications will be needed in order to learn online professional communication skills, submit assignments and manage team projects. Students will need a free Google Account, a free WordPress blog account, and a free account with the Canvas course management application. Browsers "Mozilla Firefox" versions 3.6 and higher and "Internet Explorer" version 8 and higher are recommended to access the course's various online technologies.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Students are encouraged to bring laptops and smart phones to class and use them as they wish, as long as it is course related or not disturbing or distracting others in any way. If use is inappropriate, then after the first warning if disturbance occurs again, the user's electronic item may be banned from class.

During the first month of the course, be prepared to focus your learning on course technologies as well as on team project planning and course concepts. Class lectures will often include demonstrations involving the use of technology and it may be useful to follow along on one's own computer in class. These technologies and skills will be useful throughout the course and will build skills and knowledge you can use in academic and professional life.

Assignments & due dates

Major assignments include "required early components" such as drafts and appendices which are not graded based on their quality but rather assessed for being complete and on time. Only the major, final component of each assignment is graded and receives a score out of 100 points. If a required early component of the assignment is late or incomplete, a penalty will be applied to the assignment score, as described below. Requiring an early component of major assignments motivates students to complete portions of a complex assignment in stages and to receive peer or instructor feedback before the complete assignment is due for grading.

Sept 29 **Preliminary plan (team)** (Required early component of the 20% Full Proposal) 750 words and several appendices.

Sept 30 **Short Reflection #1 (individual)** (Required early component of 15% Final Reflective Essay Exam)

Oct. 06 **Bibliography spreadsheet.** (Required early component of the 15% Rhetorical Criticism) This is an individual page of a team spreadsheet. Each team member compiles a list of 5 web sites referenced in APA format with annotations and mini-critiques.

Oct. 14 ***15% Rhetorical Criticism essay (Individual); Bibliography spreadsheet** due earlier as scheduled. The

essay is 1000 words minimum critiquing at least 2 web pages each taken from 2 different websites from one's bibliography. The assignment also includes 2 screenshots properly captioned and integrated with the argument. If the bibliography is late or incomplete, a 5 point penalty may be deducted from the assignment score out of 100.

- Oct. 12-19 **Draft of proposal (Team)**. (Required early component of 20% Full Proposal). At least 1000 words in paragraphs and complete sentences due the evening before the team's appointment with the instructor. All team members need to have contributed a substantive portion of the draft and should be at the meeting to take notes on the feedback and consult about proposal finalization plans.
- Oct. 21 **20% Full Proposal (Team); Preliminary Plan and Draft** due earlier as scheduled. The full proposal 1500 words minimum, edited by all team members, and properly formatted, with navigation chart or outline, properly captioned images, plus required appendices and reference list. If the preliminary plan or draft is late or incomplete, a 5 point penalty may be deducted from the assignment score out of 100.
- Oct. 28 **Short Reflection #2 (individual)** (Required early component of 15% Final Reflective Essay Exam)
- Nov. 18 **Data collection quota checkpoint**. This is not an assignment but a team checkpoint. By the time the Final Online Content and Report are submitted, each student is responsible for interviewing 2 people, OR observing 2 public events, OR a combination of these forms of research. If an individual's data collection quota is incomplete by this date, the instructor must be contacted to assign a substitute textual research method involving equivalent effort. Up to 10 points may be deducted from the 40% final assignment score for individuals who fall short on their data collection quota without an approved substitute method.
- Nov. 23 – Dec 02 **Draft of Final Online Content; Consultation** with community partners due as scheduled. (Required early components of Final Online Content & Report assignment). The draft is based on at least 1000 words of individual draft writing. Teams provide an informal presentation of their draft content to the community partner on the scheduled date.
- Dec. 03 **Short Reflection #3 (individual)** (Required early component of 15% Final Reflective Essay Exam)
- Dec. 08 ***40% Final Online Content and Final Report; Draft and Consultation** due earlier as scheduled. The Online Content is 1500 words minimum per team member (Individual) comprised of a collection of web pages based on students' journalistic interviews and data collection. The Final Report is 1500 words minimum (Team). These two major components are weighted as 30% of the course grade for the Online Content and 10% for the Report, and are conceptually integrated with one another. Penalties may be deducted from individuals' total 40% score as follows: up to 10 points for missing signed consent forms for interviews one has used in writing, and up to 10 points for falling short on one's data collection quota. For late or missing early components (Draft and Consultation), 5 points each may be deducted.
- Dec. 16 **15% Final Reflective Essay Exam (Individual); 3 sets of Short Reflections & Replies** due earlier as scheduled. The reflective essay exam is a take-home open-book exam of 1500 words minimum. The essay concepts are announced during the final week of class. It draws on 3 designated course concepts and applies them to reflections on students' research and learning experiences. Students must quote or paraphrase from textbooks and readings, and also from their earlier short reflections or from the short reflections of their peers (all must be properly cited). For each late or incomplete set of Short Reflections & Replies, a penalty of up to 5 points for each may be deducted from the assignment score out of 100 (for 3

late or incomplete short reflections = 15 point penalty).

Dec. 16 **10% Class and Team Participation score (Individual)** partly based on data gathered from students through the required **Self/Peer Assessment survey** due Dec. 16 and partly based on the instructor's observations, notes, and records. Each team's online survey opens after the team's final report is submitted and will be available at the link provided until end of day on the due date.

Notes on assignments:

- Completion of the Rhetorical Criticism and Final Online Content is necessary in order to pass the course.
- A significant percentage of the course grade is based on work completed during or after the last week of class. However, the final assignments are based on components completed earlier in the term with significant guidance and feedback.
- Minimum length estimates are based on the least amount of text possible to cover the complete assignment if it is very concise. There is no bonus or penalty for extra length. Most people will need to go beyond the minimum length, especially if your writing style is more diffuse. It is not advisable go beyond 2x the required length, and the quality will suffer if you include irrelevant information or if your document is wordy or involves unnecessary repetition. Minimum length requirements do NOT include *quotations* longer than 40 words, b) *borrowed* media such as images, figures or tables you did not create yourself, c) front matter such as title pages, tables of contents, and abstracts, and d) end matter such as reference lists and appendices.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Policy for Late assignments

When the major and final component of an assignment is submitted after the deadline, it may be penalized with the deduction of 5 points of the assignment's score for each day late (i.e. an assignment earning 70 out of 100 will be penalized 5 points and receive a score of 65). If the assignment is a team assignment, the late penalty is deducted from all team members' scores. This late penalty is deducted in addition to any other penalties assessed for late or incomplete required early components of the assignment.

All assignments are due by 8PM on the deadline date (with 12 hours' grace for unexpected difficulties with technology, scheduling, or short term illness). Each individual is responsible for submitting their copy of a team assignment by the due date: the team leader notifies the team when the final version is ready for individual submission.

One major assignment per term may be submitted 48 hours later than the 8pm deadline without penalty, but this extended grace period must be explicitly claimed by the student when handing it in.

Students who experience technological challenges with assignment submission must follow the course handbook's instructions for alternative locations of backup files and should inform the instructor immediately. However, the instructor and university are not responsible for incompatibility issues caused by students' own hardware and software. The university's computer labs can be used if necessary.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). As one consequence, students should identify themselves on all written work by using their ID number. In this course,

all graded assignments are submitted securely through the course management system, thereby associating the file with the student. For more information see also <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy> . Please do not put your private ID numbers on drafts or documents that others may view.

Online assignment submission: Do NOT submit assignments as email attachments. Submit each of your assignments as directed through the course management system, to declare "this is the file I take responsibility for and I am handing it in by this date/time." All graded team assignments are submitted electronically by each team member, even if there is one version of the file for the team.

Immediately after submission, verify it: re-enter the assignment area and download and view your own submitted file. Keep a backup copy of all assignments as instructed in course materials. In your submission notes, refer to the location of your backup copy in case of unexpected problems accessing your submitted file.

For all team assignments, an identical backup copy must also be posted in team file sharing areas where it is accessible to all team members and the instructor. When submitting the final version of a team assignment, the file name should include the word "FINAL" to distinguish it from a draft.

Documents must be in .doc, .docx, .xls or in online applications listed as acceptable formats. In file names, use the underscore key (_) instead of spaces, and do not use any special characters (\$&+*).

Writing skills statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, although to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/writingsupport/> Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: www.efwr.ucalgary.ca .

Grading System

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture:(Revised, effective September 2008) .

	Grading Scale
A+	96 - 100.00 %
A	90 - 95.99
A -	85 - 89.99
B+	80 - 84.99
B	75 - 79.99
B-	70 - 74.99
C+	65 - 69.99
C	60 - 64.99
C-	55 - 59.99
D+	53 - 54.99
D	50 - 52.99
F	0 - 49.99

All assignments are graded on a point scale from 0 to 100 points equivalent to percentages listed above. Where a grade on a particular assignment is expressed as a letter grade, it will normally be converted to a number using the

midpoint of the scale. That is, A- would be converted to 87.5 for calculation purposes. F will be converted to zero.

Grades on team assignments: Team assignments (Proposal and Report) are graded to give equal weight for team and individual components. The grading rubric allocates up to 50 points (out of 100) for the overall assignment's quality, and this assessment and feedback is shared with the whole team. The remaining 50 points of the assignment is based on the quality and quantity of individual contributions listed, and this score is confidential to the individual student. Team documents will identify section authors and provide a summary of the contributions of each author (writing, editing, data entry, data analysis, etc.). For the Final Report, self/peer-evaluation survey results provide additional information about individual contribution quality and quantity.

Assignment feedback: The normal turnaround time for feedback and grades on weighted assignments is 2 weeks after the deadline. More time may be needed if the time frame for grading includes holidays. Assignment feedback files will be provided via the course management application. If instructor comments are unclear or you would like further explanation or education, drop in during office hours or arrange an appointment to go over them with the instructor.

Grade appeals: If you wish to appeal or discuss your grade on an assignment, please e-mail the instructor within 5 business days of receiving the grade (the university's appeals policy grants a 15 day limit, but delays can cause problems). A personal consultation or telephone call may be required. Grades may be lowered or increased on appeal.

Revision policy: If the instructor deems it appropriate, students may be permitted to revise ONE early assignment, either the Online Rhetorical Criticism or the Proposal. Revision provides students with an additional opportunity to learn, but it entails additional effort for both the student and the instructor and is therefore not entered into lightly. Team assignments may be revised by individuals or by part or a whole team, but each individual must participate in full process of consultation and revision:

1. Students must request the revision option by email within 5 business days of receiving the grade on the original assignment in order to set up an appointment for a revision consultation.
2. At the time of the appointment, the instructor will determine whether revision is ethical and feasible based on the type and degree of improvement that can be made.
3. If revision is permitted, the new version's deadline will be determined, normally no later than 7 days after the consultation. The deadline will be confirmed through email. The revised file is submitted through email with an online backup file. Late penalties apply. The student must accept the risk that the new version may not receive a higher score.
4. The grade of the original version and revised version will be averaged to obtain the new score.

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university. You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. Readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. This includes assignments submitted in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media, and material taken from such sources. Please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (MacEwan Student Centre 4th floor, efwr.ucalgary.ca) if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and the consequences thereof please see the current University of Calgary Calendar at the following link: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Data collection ethics

All interview recruitment, consent, and data handling involves fully informed and recorded consent using forms and procedures specified in course materials. Missing or unverifiable ethics appendix items (i.e. a signed consent form) may result in an individual penalty of 10 points (out of 100) on the final 40% assignment.

Teams' use of technology

Teams must conduct all team communication openly through online group project areas accessible to all team members and instructor. Notes from team/instructor meetings and oral/texting communications should be written up by team members and shared so that there is a stable record. All team files should be found within project management applications. Students must immediately inform teammates or the instructor when technical problems interfere with teamwork.

Team split-up

If one or more team members are not meeting team standards in terms of quantity, quality, or timeliness of contributions, one or more team members should consult with the instructor in a timely manner. A team split is necessary if team issues are causing team members to fall behind schedule or experience undue interpersonal stress, or if it is likely that some members' grades will suffer from poorly skilled members' contributions while other members will unfairly benefit from highly skilled members' contributions. The latest opportunity to split up a team is one week prior to the deadline of the final report. See further procedures and policies on the course website.

Privacy and copyright

At the end of the course, according to the terms of their service-learning contract, the community partner may expect to receive a copy of the student's work for internal use and/or online publication. Therefore, students will be asked to sign a copyright waiver to release their 40% Online Content and Final Report to community partners.

Students will be expected to share some drafts and assignments with other students enrolled in the course. In addition, a team's community partner will be given access to group forums and files. Students and community partners must respect each other's privacy and copyright. Do not distribute written work beyond the boundaries of the course without the author's prior written permission. Students may quote from another person's unpublished course work in their assignments, but must cite them appropriately in text.

To enable the dissemination of communication products to the wider community, students will be given the option of providing the instructor or university with further permission to share work with future classes or publish their work online should such an opportunity arise, based on the Creative Commons license (see <http://creativecommons.ca/>).

Instructor communication

The instructor is available for questions and consultations in class, immediately before and after class, during office hours, by appointment via email or messages sent via the course management system. The instructor does not take phone calls outside of office hours without appointments, and does not use voice mail. To arrange an in-person or telephone consultation, check the instructor's public appointment calendar and email a suggested time <http://people.ucalgary.ca/~smit/OfficeHours.htm>.

All important communications with the instructor should be sent or confirmed via the course's online messaging system or regular email to smit@ucalgary.ca. The instructor will attempt to respond to email within 2 business days; if the message is urgent, please state "urgent" in the subject line. Use appropriate key words in the subject line, and

begin your email with a concise sentence explaining your request. If no response has been received from the instructor within 2 business days, students are encouraged to send a reminder. Instead of attaching files to email, state where it can be found in the course's online file areas.

Instructor's Research

To improve the quality of teaching in this subject area, your instructor occasionally analyzes data about student learning that is gathered naturally in the course of teaching, and may present these findings at conferences or in academic publications or online publications. After the course is over, the instructor or a third party may email you a request to participate in a survey, interview, or to use your assignments as research data. You are free to decline participation or withdraw participation at any time. Unless you give consent, data specific to your course work and participation will not be included in such research.

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre (220-8237) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of the course.

Students' Union

For Students' Union contacts for the Faculty of Arts see <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html>

Student Ombudsman

For details on the Student Ombudsman's Office see <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/services/student-services/student-rights.html>

Emergency Evacuation and Assembly points

See <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

"SAFEWALK" Program -- 220-5333

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night -- call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot booths.

Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see the U of C Research Ethics "Information for Applicants," sections 3.0 to 9.0, inclusive: http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/research/html/ethics/info_undergrad.html

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

The detailed schedule and calendar will be available in the online course management system.