

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

**Communication and Media Studies COMS 463 L01**  
**Rhetorical Communication in Online Environments**  
**Fall 2018**

**Monday, September 10 – Monday, December 3 (excluding October 8 & November 12)**  
**M 12:00-13:50 (L) 14:00–15:50 (T)**

**Instructor:** Dr. Lisa Stowe  
**Office:** SS206  
**Office Phone:** 403 220 4840  
**E-Mail:** lstowe@ucalgary.ca  
**Web Page:** D2L available through MyUofC portal  
**Office Hours:** M 10-11 and TH 10-11

**Course Description**

This course will explore online communication from a rhetorical perspective. This course is focused on helping students become consumers of online rhetorical messages but is also emphasizing how students can be effective and ethically driven consumers of online messages. Students will read a selection of articles outlining the theoretical approaches to online communication. Using the theory and concepts located in these articles, students will critique samples of online communication arising from a variety of organizational contexts in a variety of media and genres. Students will also engage in the creation of an organization's web content and various online documents to understand how classical rhetoric informs effective online communication. The course will also incorporate some degree of experiential learning and professional communication practice.

**Additional Information**

This course requires students to complete a major web based group project using the concept and theories discussed in class. There is allotted class time for the group project and there will be an emphasis on group collaboration throughout the semester.

**Objectives of the Course**

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

- understand from a rhetorical perspective the socio-cultural, political and economic messages of online communication.
- apply rhetorical theories to the criticism and production of online discourse.
- analyze and deconstruct from a rhetorical perspective online visual messages.

- understand how online discourse creates identity and community
- apply the specific rhetorical skills to effectively construct a variety of web based documents.
- apply the specific skills needed to collaboratively produce effective online communications.
- effectively present in front of an audience.
- effectively work and contribute to a group that simulates a workplace environment.
- create and learn in a collaborative and safe environment.

### **Textbooks and Readings**

All readings will be posted on D2L.

Felder, L. (2012;2011;). Writing for the web: Creating compelling web content using words, pictures, and sound (First ed.). Berkeley, Calif: New Riders. (Available online through the University of Calgary Library)

### **Internet and electronic communication device information**

Because of the themes and objectives of this course, laptops and other computer devices are welcomed in class but are to be only used for class activities and note taking. Please be respectful of your fellow classmates while using computers.

### **Assignments and Evaluation**

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Course components	Due
3%	<b>Group Contract</b> (1-2 pages): Each student group will develop and post in D2L a group contract outlining their expectations for effective group collaboration throughout the semester	Sept. 28
2%	<b>Personal Goals assignment</b> (1/2 page): Each student will submit 3-4 learning goals for the semester	Sept. 28
10%	<b>D2L Online Discussion Forum</b> Online Discussion forum: Students will be responsible for viewing a selected video and participating in an online discussion forum during the week of October 25. The forum	Oct. 22

	will offer several discussion prompts; students are responsible for contributing at least ONE original post (minimum 150 words) and at least ONE reply (minimum 75 words) to a classmate's post. Detailed guidelines regarding forum contributions will be posted on D2L. The forum will be open from Monday at 9am through Friday at 5pm. No submissions will be accepted once the forum has closed.	
2.5%	<b>Readiness Assessment Test:</b> 15-20 minutes. Students will complete a RAT (Readiness Assessment Tests) that will test their reading knowledge of that week's assigned readings as well as prepare them for the problem based learning activity that will take place in class.	Oct. 29
2.5%	<b>Problem Based Learning Activity</b> related to the RAT. Participation includes collaborating on a problem based learning activity.	.. Oct. 29
20%	<b>Rhetorical Analysis of an Online Document</b> (800-1000 words)  Students will complete a rhetorical analysis of an online document using the rhetorical tools discussed in class to determine the effectiveness of the online message. Tools used will include; ethos, pathos, logos, stasis theory, exigence, etc. A choice of documents to be analyzed will be provided by the instructor.	Nov. 5
25%	<b>Midterm Exam</b> (Closed Book)  The exam will cover all the reading and class material to date. Students will complete a variety of questions which may include multiple choice, fill in the blanks, matching, short answer and a longer answer essay  Time allowed: 2 hours	.. Nov. 19
10%	<b>Website Launch (10 minute presentation)</b>  Students will present or "launch" their web based project to the rest of the class, highlighting their creative and decision	Dec 3  ..

	making processes and walking us through the website. This launch can take the format of a ppt, prezi or another presentation strategy.	
15%	<p><b>Process ePortfolio (15 pages max, excluding appendices)</b></p> <p>Students will digitally submit a process portfolio, using the eportfolio tool in D2L. This portfolio will highlight and paint a picture of the process of creating a website for a specific organization. The portfolio will contain a variety of documents including a justification for visual and graphic design with screenshot images; an information architecture assessment and rhetorical justification for content; an overview of the online ethical characteristics of the organization; an explanation with examples of the variety of genres within this organization; and a synthesis of how the course concepts and theories support or challenge the organization's online presence.</p>	Dec 3
10%	<p><b>Take Home Exam: Individual Reflection (800 -1000 words)</b></p> <p>Each student will submit two individual reflection essays that will synthesize their project experience in the course with the theory discussed in class.</p>	Dec 7

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No**

All assignments and exams must be completed or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

**Submission of Assignments:** Please submit all assignments to the designated dropbox on D2L. There will be submission of hard copies.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at marked final exams in SS 320. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip/foip-hia>

**Note:** It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

### Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a 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 will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit [www.ucalgary.ca/access/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/).

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework 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) should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
- When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.
- For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html> and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

### Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

Final grades are reported as letter grades. The rhetorical analysis, Process Portfolio, Presentation and take home exam will all be graded by letter grades. The other assignments will be graded by number grades.

The following chart outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. In calculating final grades in this course, letter grades will be converted to the midpoint of the percentage range, as shown in the final column of the table below.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations* *
<b>4.00</b>	Outstanding performance	<b>A+</b>	96 - 100%	98.0%
<b>4.00</b>	Excellent performance	<b>A</b>	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
<b>3.70</b>	Approaching excellent performance	<b>A -</b>	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
<b>3.30</b>	Exceeding good performance	<b>B+</b>	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
<b>3.00</b>	Good performance	<b>B</b>	75 - 79.99%	77.5%

<b>2.70</b>	Approaching good performance	<b>B-</b>	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
<b>2.30</b>	Exceeding satisfactory performance	<b>C+</b>	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
<b>2.00</b>	Satisfactory performance	<b>C</b>	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
<b>1.70</b>	Approaching satisfactory performance	<b>C-</b>	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
<b>1.30</b>	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	<b>D+</b>	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
<b>1.00</b>	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	<b>D</b>	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
<b>0.00</b>	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	<b>F</b>	0 - 49.99%	0%

\* If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades.

\*\* These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

### Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will 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. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the writing support services in the Student Success Centre (3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Taylor Family Digital Library). Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

### 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. 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. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436>. Research and citation resources are also available on the website of the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/> If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or visit the writing support services in the Student Success Centre (3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Taylor Family Digital Library, at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

### 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>

## Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
<b>ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)</b>	SS 102 403-220-3580 <a href="mailto:artsads@ucalgary.ca">artsads@ucalgary.ca</a>
<b>CAMPUS SECURITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calgary Police Service</li> <li>• Emergency Text Messaging</li> <li>• Emergency Evacuation &amp; Assembly</li> <li>• Safewalk Program</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a> <b>403-220-5333</b></p> <p><b>403-266-1234      Emergency: call 911</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints</a></p> <p>If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a></p>
<b>DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT help line</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students">http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students</a></p> <p>403-220-5555 or <a href="mailto:itsupport@ucalgary.ca">itsupport@ucalgary.ca</a></p>
<b>STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing Support Services</li> <li>• Student Services Mobile App</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/ssc">http://ucalgary.ca/ssc</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support">http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support</a></p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents">http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents</a></p>
<b>STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty of Arts Reps</li> <li>• Student Ombudsman</li> </ul>	<p><a href="https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/">https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds">http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds</a></p>
<b>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counselling Services</li> <li>• Health Services</li> <li>• Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE</li> <li>• Online resources and tips</li> </ul>	<p><b>403-210-9355</b> (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm</p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</a></p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</a></p> <p>403-266-HELP (4357)</p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</a></p> <p>If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.</p>

## Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

Date	Topic and Readings	Activity/Assignment Due
Monday, September 10	Introduction to course Group Set Up Strengths Quest	Organizing groups, setting up group pages in D2L, ..
Monday, September 17	<p><b>The Web and Rhetoric</b></p> <p>Burbules, N. C. (2002). The Web as a rhetorical place. Silicon literacies: Communication, innovation and education in the electronic age, 75-84.</p>	Using Wix and Google Drive
Monday, September 24	<p><b>Defining Genre in Online Communication</b></p> <p>Miller, C. R. (1979). A humanistic rationale for technical writing. <i>College English</i>, 40(6), 610-617.</p> <p>Lomborg, S. (2011). Social media as communicative genres. <i>Journal of Media and Communication Research</i>, 27(51), 55-71. doi: 10.7146/mediekultur.v27i51.4012</p>	<p>Group Contracts (3%) (Group) Personal Goals Assignment (2%) (Individual)</p> <p>Upload your group contract to your D2L group page and your personal goals assignment to the designated dropbox by <b>Friday, September 28.</b></p>
Monday, October 1	<p><b>Deliberative Rhetoric and Online Communication</b></p> <p>Jackson, B., &amp; Wallin, J. (2009). Rediscovering the "back-and-forthness" of rhetoric in the age of YouTube. <i>College Composition and Communication</i>, 61(2), W374.</p>	<p><b>Technical Writing Workshop</b></p> <p>Felder, L. (2012;2011;). Writing for the web: Creating compelling web content using words, pictures, and sound (First ed.). Berkeley, Calif: New Riders.</p>
Monday, October 8	<b>No Class: Thanksgiving</b>	....

Monday, October 15	<p><b>Ethos and Online Communication</b></p> <p>Miller, C. R. (2003). Writing in a Culture of Simulation. Towards a rhetoric of everyday life: new directions in research on writing, text, and discourse, 58.</p> <p>Warnick, B. (2004). Online ethos: Source credibility in an “authorless” environment. <i>American Behavioral Scientist</i>, 48(2), 256-265.</p>	<p><b>Technical Writing Workshop</b></p> <p>Felder, L. (2012;2011;). Writing for the web: Creating compelling web content using words, pictures, and sound (First ed.). Berkeley, Calif: New Riders.</p>
Monday, October 22	No Formal Class: D2L Activity: More details on D2L.	<p><b>Complete Online Discussion Forum Participation by Friday, October 26. (10%)</b></p>
Monday, October 29	<p><b>Rhetoric and Online Images (Flipped Class)</b></p> <p>LaGrandeur, K. (2003). Digital images and classical persuasion. Eloquent Images: Word and Image in the Age of New Media. Ed. Mary E. Hocks and Michelle R. Kendrick. Cambridge: MIT Press, (p. 117-136).</p> <p>Hocks, M.E.(2003). Understanding Visual Rhetoric in Digital Writing Environments. <i>College Composition and Communication</i>, Vol. 54, No. 4, 629-656.</p>	<p><b>Readiness Assessment Test (RAT) (2.5%)</b></p> <p><b>Problem Based Learning Activity (2.5%)</b></p>
Monday, November 5	<p><b>Rhetoric and Social Media</b></p> <p>Reader, B. (2012). Free press vs. free speech? The rhetoric of “civility” in regard to anonymous online comments. <i>Journalism &amp; Mass Communication Quarterly</i>, 89(3), 495-513.</p>	<p><b>Technical Writing Workshop</b></p> <p>Felder, L. (2012;2011;). Writing for the web: Creating compelling web content using words, pictures, and sound (First ed.). Berkeley, Calif: New Riders.</p> <p><b>Rhetorical Analysis of an Online Document (20%) (Individual)</b></p>
Monday, November 12	Reading Week. No class	.....

Monday, November 19	Mid-term exam	<b>Mid-term exam (25%) (Individual)</b>
Monday, November 26	<p><b>Online communication in Organizations</b></p> <p>Baptista, J., &amp; Galliers, R. D. (2012, January). Social media as a driver for new rhetorical practices in organisations. In <i>System Science (HICSS), 2012 45th Hawaii International Conference on</i> (pp. 3540-3549). IEEE.</p>	
Monday, December 3	Website Launch	<p><b>Website Launch Presentation (10%) (Group)</b></p> <p><b>Process Portfolio (15%) (Group)</b></p> <p><b>Take Home Exam: Individual Reflection (10%) (Due Friday, December 7)</b></p>