

COMM1050

technical communication

Jenna Jacobson

Fall 2013
Tuesday
8:10-11:00 a.m.
UA 1350



Faculty of Social Science and Humanities

Course Description

This course will assist students in developing professional writing and presentation skills required for university assignments and for their professional work in the future. It will start with basic writing and speaking skills and will emphasize their application in the preparation of reports and other technical writing. Topics for the course include using correct grammar and punctuation, organizing ideas, formulating persuasive arguments, and preparing narrative and written technical reports. Part of the process will involve students in the critical analysis of the writing and speaking of others as a means of developing one's own skills.

COURSE MATERIAL

Required Textbook

Irish, R. & Weiss, P.E. (2009). *Engineering Communication*. 2nd Edition. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Meet your instructor: **Jenna Jacobson**

Office Hours: Tuesday, 5:00-6:00 p.m.
or by appointment
Office Location: UA 2045—Science Building
Email: use Blackboard - jenna.jacobson@uoit.ca
Twitter: @jacobsonjenna
Course Hashtag: #COMM1050



Casual Coffee Chats

Join me for a casual chat over coffee every Tuesday, 4:30-5:00 p.m.

Just drop by the coffee shop at the Science Building entrance

Learning Outcomes

On the successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the techniques, tools, elements, and processes that apply to technical communication
- Plan, design, and edit memos, proposals, and analytical reports
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of referencing and citing a variety of sources appropriately
- Create and present technical documents that are clear, effective, and well-written
- Apply the principles of technical communication to future career pursuits

Meet your amazing Teaching Assistants (TA):

Amrinder Brar - Melissa Mastrangelo - Susan Scott - Amanda Wendelgass. Please contact TA through Blackboard

Course Expectations

Collaboration

In a fast-paced work environment, you will inevitably work in teams and rely on other people in your future careers. At the very least, others, including both professors and employers, will assess your work. This class will incorporate peer review and collaborative learning. The peer review process allows you to interact with other students, and review different ways of approaching and writing about a topic. This will take place through reviewing your colleagues in-lecture activities, collaborative evaluation of your YouTube oral presentations, and working in teams to produce the Analytical Report. We can all learn from each other.

Readings

To take full advantage of the class, please have all of the readings for each week completed before coming to class. Not everything in the readings will be repeated in class because the class will be interactive with great multi-media examples and time provided for discussion. Be sure to highlight or take notes from the textbook and in class because all of the information is useful and fair game for the assessments.

Technology

Please bring your laptop, network cable, and laptop charger to every class. Use your laptop to enhance your learning experience by taking notes, Googling a concept from class, conducting research, and completing activities. We all love our technologies, but try to keep other distractions to a minimum. Even if you think it doesn't distract you, it may distract your peers around you. I would recommend that you use a flash drive to back up your assignments as there is nothing worse than losing your work. For online tutorials, you may find that a headset is particularly useful to improve the audio. If you are experiencing problems with your laptop or if it is being repaired, please contact the Mobile Computing Centre ext. 2727.

Social Media

In an attempt to foster digital collaborative learning, we will be using Twitter in this course. Please use the hashtag #COMMI050 to share information that you think your classmates might find interesting or to comment on the material we discuss in lectures or in the readings. This will allow us to keep a line of communication open so you can participate at any time. Use Twitter as an opportunity to discuss key points and concisely convey what you are thinking...in 140 characters or less! Let's have fun with this.

Conduct

The classroom is an environment where diverse opinions can be openly shared. All members of this class should treat one another with respect. This includes during lecture hours and online. I would like you to feel free to ask questions at any time. Emailing, texting, watching a YouTube video, and trying to pay attention in class is probably too much, even for the best multi-taskers. We meet for only 3 hours a week, so please come prepared and ready to engage.

Attendance

Formal attendance will not be taken in lectures, but there will be in-lecture activities that can only be accessed during lectures. There will be NO MAKE-UPS for missed in-lecture activities. Please respect each other and our time together by arriving on time for class. If you happen to miss class, my lecture notes are always posted on Blackboard, but speak to your classmates to find out what information was missed or to obtain class notes.

Communication

If you have a question, chances are you are not alone and other people in the course may have the same question. Please post all questions to Blackboard so everyone can benefit from the collective knowledge. Contact your TA if you would like to set up an appointment with them.

Matters for the sole attention of your TA or myself should be done through Blackboard. Emails to the teaching team should be professionally written, including proper language, tone, and composition. To help keep things organized, please include the course code and tutorial number in the subject line and sign your full name with student number. This is good practice for the "business world," so let's start using those skills here.

Most emails will be answered as soon as possible within 48 hours. If you have a question:

1. Ask your friends or classmates
2. Post queries on the "General Questions" discussion thread on Blackboard
3. Email your TA
4. Or feel free to email me if the question is more private

Note: Emails sent after 5 p.m. regarding an assignment due the following day will not be answered, so plan ahead.

Grading Scheme

Assignment	Grade Percent
In-Lecture Activities	20%
Tutorials	10%
Proposal Outline	15%
Formal Analytical Report	25%
Test #1	15%
Test #2	15%

Official UOIT Grading Scheme
A+ 90-100; A 85-89; A- 80-84;
B+ 77-79; B 73-76; B- 70-72;
C+ 67-69; C 60-66;
D 50-59; F 0-49

In-Lecture Activities (4)

There are two parts to this assignment. First, you will be given an assignment to complete in class and post by 11:00 p.m. The goal is to complete the activity in class, but feel free to use the extra time if you need it. Once completed, post your assignment to the specific discussion board on Blackboard. Second, you will comment and peer-review 2 other students' posts. This collaborative learning is a crucial part of the activity and gives us a chance to learn from each other. *Please show respect to your fellow students and TAs – try to work with each other to build knowledge and provide constructive feedback.*

Tutorials

Tutorials are an essential component to this course where you can explore ideas in a small group. You are required to attend all tutorials, as grades will be based on formal attendance. Your amazing TAs are there to help; tutorial topics will provide you with important information and practice opportunities that will help with the successful completion of the major assignment and the course more generally.

Tests (2)

There are two assessments for this course that will comprise of multiple choice, true or false, and short essay questions. Tests will be completed through Blackboard during the time allotted in class. To ensure academic integrity, all assessments will be completed using Respondus Lockdown Browser.

Major Assignment

The major assignment consists of two parts: 1) Proposal Outline and 2) Analytical Report. You will complete the assignments in groups of two. Partners must be from the same lecture section and have the same Teaching Assistant.

The Proposal Outline is a crucial component to the assignment, as it will outline what you and your partner choose to develop and research for the Analytical Report. You will receive constructive feedback to incorporate into your Analytical Report. Assignment outlines will be posted on Blackboard and discussed in class.

***“The more that you read,
the more things you will know.
The more that you learn,
the more places you'll go”
— Dr. Seuss***

Diversity of Learning Styles

Your TAs and I recognize that all students learn in diverse ways, such as visual, auditory, tactile, etc. A multimodal learning environment is utilized in lectures and tutorials, which combine the online and offline interaction of lectures, discussions, social media, etc. Your success is our priority, so please do not hesitate to us know if there is anything further we can do to foster a more beneficial learning environment for you.

Individual Needs and Accessibility

To ensure that disability-related concerns are properly addressed during this course, students with documented disabilities and who may require assistance to participate in this class are encouraged to speak with me as soon as possible. If you require alternative testing and examination arrangements or other academic accommodations, please contact the Centre for Students with Disabilities as early as possible to ensure needs are met.

Accommodation support is available for students with mental health, physical, mobility, sensory, medical, cognitive, or learning challenges. For more information on services provided, you can visit the website at <http://sites.uoit.ca/csd/index.php>

For any disability-related support, you may contact the Centre for Students with Disabilities by visiting the office in Room SW116 in Gordon Willey Building, by calling 905.721.3123, or emailing disabilities@uoit.ca

A

ssignment Policy

Assignments for this course will be submitted electronically via "Assignments" on Blackboard.

Non-negotiated Late Assignment: This is an assignment that has been handed in late, i.e. after the first ten minutes past the due time, without a prior agreement between the student and the instructor to extend the time for submission of the assignment. Such assignments will be considered late and the final grade for the assignment will be reduced by 5% per day. (Assignments are not accepted after 10 days.)

Negotiated Late Assignment: This is an assignment that has been handed in late with the permission of the instructor due to extenuating circumstances. The student must provide documentation to validate the extenuating circumstance that might include hospitalization, death of a family member or significant other. The instructor will have the discretion to determine any extension in such situations. The instructor and student, through discussion, will have mutually agreed on the time/extension and penalty (if applicable) that the student will receive.

**NOTE: It is your responsibility to submit complete, valid documents for marking. Incomplete or corrupted files will be marked as a zero. In addition, excuses such as "my computer died" or other related technology-based excuses are not valid. Plan ahead, save documents to a USB drive, and always submit well before the assignment is due..*

Your success is our priority, so please do not hesitate to let your instructor or TA know if there is anything further we can do to foster a more beneficial learning environment for you.

A

cademic Integrity

Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will not be tolerated in this course. *Plagiarism* is an extremely serious academic offence and carries penalties varying from failure in an assignment to suspension from the University. Definitions, penalties, and procedures for dealing with plagiarism are set out in UOIT's "Academic Conduct Policy" which is printed in section 5.15 of the UOIT Calendar. It outlines what is meant by Academic Misconduct and Professional Unsuitability and the penalties for violating this policy.

It is essential that you be able to document your creative process in producing assignments because assignments sometimes get lost, and because questions of authorship sometimes arise. You must keep your research notes and rough drafts for papers and assignments, even after the finished work has been graded and returned. When composing on a computer, preserve copies of work in progress at regular intervals so that you have a track record of how the assignment evolved. Print hard copies of the work at different stages, or use the 'save as' function on the computer to record successive drafts. The sequence of drafts should be carefully noted. An inability to provide these materials, if requested, will constitute grounds for failure on the assignment and will result in a report kept on file in the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities.

Turnitin.com

UOIT Note: *The University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) is committed to the fundamental values of preserving academic integrity as defined in UOIT policies and contained in the UOIT Calendar. UOIT and faculty members reserve the right to use electronic means to detect and help prevent plagiarism. Students agree that by taking this course all assignments are subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com. Assignments submitted to Turnitin.com will be included as source documents in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents for five academic years. The faculty member may require students to submit their assignments electronically to Turnitin.com or the faculty member may submit questionable text on behalf of a student. The terms that apply to UOIT's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com website.*

If you do **not** want your assignment submitted to Turnitin.com, you must submit the opt-out form and completed assignment in person and not submit electronically on Blackboard. *Your assignment must then be submitted with all research notes and rough drafts.* Please see the university's policy on academic integrity and the note on turnitin.com that follows and download the cover sheet from Blackboard. Information on Academic Integrity can be found at http://www.uoit.ca/sites/library/Folders/Unused/ResearchHelp/research_topic/academic-integrity-and-plagiarism.php

**“Conversation is king.
Content is just something to talk about”
— Cory Doctorow**

This outline documents the instructor's intentions for this course. It may become clear that some modifications may be necessary. Any modifications that may influence student success or the marking scheme will be made only after discussions have taken place with students.

Class Outline

#	Date	Lecture Topics	Assignment/Test
1	09/10	Welcome to COMM1050	
2	09/17	Writing with Purpose Principles #1-3 (pp. 16-56) Proposal Outline	In-Lecture Activity #1 (Email Proposal)
3	09/24	Researching Effectively Communication Matters (pp. 1-15, 314-320) <i>Guest Speaker: Librarian Katie Harding</i>	
4	10/01	Organizing Information & Introductions Principles #5-6 (pp. 78-108)	Proposal Outline
5	10/08	Developing a Credible Argument Principle #4 (pp. 57-77) Principle #7 (pp. 109-116)	
6	10/15	Understanding Language <i>Guest Speaker: Writing Centre Christina Archibald</i> Analytical Report Outline Test #1 Review	In-Lecture Activity #2 (Translation Piece)
7	10/22	In-Class Assessment	Test #1
8	10/29	Communicating Beyond Writing Visual and Oral Communication (pp. 245-313)	
9	11/05	Structuring a Paragraph Principles #9-11 (pp. 125-162)	In-Lecture Activity #3 (Oral Presentation)
10	11/12	Writing for Readability Principles #13-15 (pp. 180-196) Resume Writing	
11	11/19	Positioning Information Principle #8 (pp. 117-124) Principle #16 (pp. 197-198)	Analytical Report
12	11/26	Writing your Future <i>Guest Speakers: Career Centre Anne Coulby & Jeremy Greenberg</i> Test #2 Review	In-Lecture Activity #4 (Writing Reflection)
13	12/03	In-Class Assessment	Test #2

Class begins – Tuesday, September 10, 2013

Class ends – Tuesday, December 3, 2013

Tutorials begin – Thursday, September 12, 2013

Tutorials end – Wednesday, November 20, 2013

Tutorial Outline

#	Date	Tutorial Topics
1	09/12-09/18	Introduction – Using Adobe Connect Meet your TA/Classmates Email Etiquette
2	09/19-09/25	Proposal Outline Overview Select Topic & Partner Audience Analysis
3	09/26-10/02	Criteria Matrix Documentation (APA & IEEE) & In-Text Citations Turnitin.com (Originality Report) <i>Proposal – Questions</i>
4	10/03-10/09	Appendix B – Sentence Types (pp. 329-336) Appendix F – Punctuation (pp. 357-361)
-	10/10-10/16	<i>No Tutorials (Thanksgiving October 14)</i>
5	10/17-10/23	Analytical Report Overview Researching & Documenting Outline – Organizing Information
6	10/24-10/30	Oral Presentations
-	10/31-11/06	<i>No Tutorials</i>
7	11/07-11/13	Editing and Proofreading Using Headings <i>Analytical Report – Questions</i>
8	11/14-11/20	Resumes and Cover Letters

Important Dates

#	In-Lecture Activity	1 st Post by 11:00 p.m.	Peer-Review Posts by 11:00 p.m.
1	Email Proposal	Tuesday, September 17	Thursday, September 19
2	Translation Piece	Tuesday, October 15	Thursday, October 17
3	Oral Presentation	Tuesday, November 5	Thursday, November 7
4	Writing Reflection	Tuesday, November 26	Thursday, November 28

In-Lecture Activities

The In-Lecture Activities will be peer-reviewed, and your grade will be based on active participation and completeness of the activity.

Major Assignments

The major assignments will be graded using a rubric.

Proposal Outline – Wednesday, October 2 by 11:00 p.m.

Analytical Report – Wednesday, November 20 by 11:00 p.m.

Assessments

Assessments will consist of multiple choice, true or false, and essay questions.

Test #1 – Tuesday, October 22

Test #2 – Tuesday, December 3

Tips for Success

I know what it is like being a new student at a university – in fact, I have done so at 4 universities, including a university in Singapore!

Here are some tidbits of knowledge I have picked up on the way:

Read – Have your readings done before class, but also read anything you can find around campus, such as bulletin boards, emails, flyers, etc. There is always something new and exciting happening if you keep your eyes open.

Engage – Join clubs, meet your classmates, attend a public lecture, get to know your TA, and make new friends. Some of the most interesting people you will meet are here at the university.

Ask – If you ever feel lost or confused, just ask. Seek help early for all academic, personal, financial, etc. issues so you can move forward confidently.

Manage your time – Be sure to make time for readings and studying, but also maintaining a healthy life-balance of "me time" and some down time with family and friends.

Connect – Your happiness and success are my priorities, so please come and meet with me. I'd be happy to chat over coffee anytime, so let me know.

Have fun – The university experience may well be the best time of your life, so enjoy it. It's why I have continued in academia for so many years (and plan for many more to come).

If there is anything I can do to help you over the course of the year, please come and see me. **I have an open-door approach and would love to get to know you!**

Please feel free to call me Jenna.

Some useful resources for you:

Campus Health Centre is there for you when you need some extra support or need someone to talk to. http://www.uoit.ca/current_students/campus_services/campus_health_centre/services/counselling.php

Student Experience Centre is a hub for student involvement and support, including campus events.

<https://studentexperience.uoit.ca/>

Student Learning Centre provides academic services in Mathematics, Writing, English as a Second Language (ESL) and Study Skills.

<http://academicsuccess.uoit.ca/>

**“When we change the way we
communicate, we change society”
— Clay Shirky**