Advanced Practicum in Tech Writing Fall 2001
Instructor: Dr. Jack Jobst E-mail: jjobst@mtu.edu
Office: Walker 329 A Office Hours: T Th 9-11
Classroom: Walker 116 Class time: 11:05 AM-11:55 AM

Purpose of Course: (a) To practice skills, especially in time management and task-specific communication, useful to those who expect to make their living as technical communicators, and (b) to briefly introduce theoretical and research elements of technical communication.

What is the course Attendance Policy?
Students are expected to attend all classes. The instructor will allow four class absences for common illnesses, plant trips, personal reasons, etc. More than four class absences will usually drop grades one level (B to C; C to D, etc.). Missing six classes (two weeks) is grounds for failure. Confer with the instructor as soon as possible if you have mitigating circumstances (e.g. hospitalization).

As a Disabled Person, What Are My Rights?
MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disability Act of 1990 (ADA).

If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students, (7-2212).

For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, the department head, or the Affirmative Action Office (7-3310).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

What are Commentaries?
These are one-page informal responses to the readings we will do in this class, and occasionally to questions posed by the instructor. Submit a commentary whenever you see Read in the syllabus. The purpose of a commentary is to encourage thought about the topic before we meet in class to discuss the readings.

No commentaries will be accepted later than the class meeting immediately following the due date.

You may discuss any aspect of the material in your words, but try to avoid repeating the material, or writing a descriptive abstract. Instead, focus on such areas as the usefulness of the information, the completeness, the questions you had that were or were not answered by the material.

Grading will be pass/fail on individual commentaries, with the number of commentaries you submit providing the letter grade (e.g., if you submit all assigned commentaries your grade will be an A; all but three, a B, etc.). Usually I will read every commentary, but I won’t always comment. If you have specific questions about the class, the assignments, etc., e-mail is the more effective method.

What if I forget a commentary? Bring it to the next class meeting, or you may leave it in my mailbox (3rd floor, highway side of Walker) no later than the class day after the date it is due.

What is a “Synopsis”?
These are 3-4 paragraph descriptions of what we discussed in class on a particular date. Dates will be assigned around week 2 on our email list, hu4634-1. Post your synopses to the same location as soon as you can, but no later than two calendar days after the class meeting. If you are unable to fulfill this assignment, you are responsible for finding a substitute.

Use headings in your posting to identify the major topics, and a lot of white space! (Double space between your short paragraphs.)

How Will Peer Reviews Help Me?
Peer evaluations offer at least two advantages: First, they strengthen writing skills by asking class members to watch for specific problems in your drafts, thereby realizing how they themselves may have made certain errors; second, they help writers by offering an opportunity to correct major errors before the instructor evaluates it.

Note: Major assignments will not be accepted w/o an attached peer critique.

What if I’m Unable to Finish My Draft in Time for the Peer Review?
Since you cannot submit an assignment w/o the peer review attached, you must find someone in class willing to review your work and complete the form. You will also find yourself sitting in class on the Peer Review days with nothing to do.

Do your best to complete the work on time. If you run into time management difficulties, inform the instructor as soon as possible. He might be able to help in some way.

Where Will I find the Class Readings?
If the syllabus indicates page numbers, the reading is from our class text, Handbook of Technical Writing. Otherwise, the readings are on reserve at the Van Pelt Library reserve desk.
Advanced Practicum in Tech Comm
HU 4634, Section 1: Fall 2001

Course Calendar
Aug 27 Intro to the course.
29 Discuss Major Projects
31 Discuss Headings.

Sept 3 No class: Labor Day.
4 (Tue.) Email the instructor on a possible major project topic or topics.
5 Discuss Proposals. Read pp. 496-528
7 K-Day; no class
10 Proposal writing (cont.)
12 Read “What Constitutes a Readable Technical Style?” on reserve in Libr.
14 Due: Draft of proposal; peer review.
17 Due: Final draft of Proposal. Discuss Employee Handbook assignment.
19 Employee Handbook (cont.).
24 Due: Draft of Employee Handbook; peer review.
26 Due: final draft of Employee Handbook; Discuss Technical Training Assign.

Oct 1 Work in groups on Tech Trng assign.
3 Read: “Topical Focus in TW”
5 Technical Training Presentation #1
8 Technical Training Presentation #2
10 Technical Training Presentation #3
12 Technical Training Presentation #4
15 Discuss Progress Reports. Read: pp. 482-87.
17 Read: “The Ethics of Teaching Ethics…”
19 Class does not meet. Work on major project.
22-26 Class does not meet. Work on project.
29 Due: Progress report #1. Discuss Procedures Writing
31 Discuss formal reports. Read pp. 239-245.

Nov 2 Read “Revising Functional Documents: The Scenario Principle.”
5 Work in class or CCLI on procedures writing.
7 Due: Procedures assignment; peer review.
9 Due: Final draft of Procedures assignment.
12 Due: Progress Report #2. Discuss final oral presentation.
14 Class does not meet. Work on Project.
16 Class does not meet. Work on Project.
19-23 Thanksgiving Break
26 Begin oral presentations.
28 Oral presentations (cont.)
30 Oral presentations (cont.)

Dec 3 Oral presentations (as needed.)
5 Work on Project Reports in CCLI
7 Due: Project reports draft. Peer review.
10 Due: Projects, final drafts.
12 Read “Ethics of Expediency…”
14 Course Evaluation. Bring a #2 pencil.

Grading
Commentaries 10
Informal Proposal 15
Tech Trng. Assign. 10
Procedures 10
Major Project
Prog. Report #1 10
Two others, each 5
Oral Presentation 10
Formal Report 20
Participation: 5