There is only one good, knowledge, and one evil, ignorance. -Socrates

Section R02, Fall 2001
Walker 144, MWF 9:05-9:55 AM
Instructor: Amy Graham

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Course Web Site: http://www.hu.mtu.edu/revisions/

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class will help you strengthen your abilities with oral, visual, and written communication. You will be making speeches [individually and in small groups] that require supporting visuals, and you will be composing papers that require formatting as well as visual and written evidence. You will also be analyzing the oral, visual, and written presentations of others to determine what kinds of communication media and strategies are or are not appropriate for different situations; drawing on such analysis, you will recommend and then develop a piece of communication [such as web site, brochure, a presentation, an event, etc.] that helps an organization better achieve its communication goals.

CLASS GOALS

By the end of this semester, you should have:

- Acquired a wide repertoire of oral, written, and visual communication strategies and tools.
- Assessed different communicative contexts in order to decide which media, strategies, and tools are appropriate for the situation and audience.
- Developed a range of strategies for effectively giving and getting feedback and for assessing your own communicative products.
- Learned the possibilities of and necessity for revision as a strategy for achieving specific communicative goals.

COURSE MATERIALS

The following materials (all available in the campus bookstore) are required for this class:

- A journal whose shape and size pleases you.

You should bring these books to each class with you, along with a writing utensil.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

You are allowed to miss three classes per semester. You are always responsible for work missed during an absence, and if you come to class unprepared after an absence your grade will suffer. Each absence beyond three will result in a lowering of your grade by 2%. Two tardies equals an absence (although I'd much rather you be late than not show up at all) and sleeping in class will also count as an absence. If you know you will be absent, please let me know so that we can work something out. I am much more forgiving of absences if you are responsible about the situation.
Each other. You can only learn the matter of this class through being attentive to what others say. You can only learn the matter of this class through taking seriously the opinions and thoughts (and criticisms) of others. In addition, you will feel most comfortable in this class and get the most done if you develop friendly, collegial, and respectful relations with others in class. You will also help make this college community be a community if you work towards such relations.

Me. I want you to succeed in this class, and to learn - so I want to be sure you always understand the how's and the why's of the work I ask of you. Please don't hesitate to ask questions in class, and please come to my office hours (you don't have to have some life-or-death problem to come to office hours just come with any question or concern you have about our class). (And, in general, in college, people who talk with their professors do better.)

The Writing Center (phone: 7-2207). The Writing Center is in Walker 107. The Writing Center is not about correcting spelling and grammar (although they can help you with this), but about helping you become a confident and thoughtful communicator. You can make appointments to meet weekly with a coach, or you can take advantage of drop-in hours. People who visit the Writing Center do better in classes both because they receive friendly encouragement and support and also because such visits will help you gain even more confidence and seriousness in your communication practices.

At the end of the semester, you will have added to your portfolio the documents listed below. You may not understand now what some of these documents are, but you will be receiving full explanations and detailed assignments in class.

- A self- and class-assessment cover letter
- The journal you will keep during the semester
- A rhetorical analysis of a persuasive civic speech
- A draft & final version of a persuasive academic paper (all comments to be included)
- A summary response of all the feedback you receive to your formal oral academic persuasive presentation in week 10.
- A written project proposal from weeks 11-14
- The piece of communication from weeks 11-14
- A written project report from weeks 11-14
- A summary response of all the feedback you receive to your small group, oral, informative presentation in week 14

In addition to the paper documents above, you will also be making three oral presentations in class, which may be videotaped for you to include in your portfolio.

- A small group pitch proposal (a short persuasive presentation).
- An individual formal, academic presentation.
- A small group informative presentation
- Lead 1 class discussion on an assigned reading

Late papers will not be accepted unless arrangements are made. Not turning in a paper on time will result in a lowering of your grade.
If, at the end of the semester, you have earned a C in this class, it means you did what was minimally expected of you: you came to all classes and did all the work. (NOTE that you must complete all the class assignments if you hope to receive a passing grade in this class). If you want a B or an A, you must not only come to all the classes and do all the work, but you must do the work with shining effort and attention. To earn a B or an A, your work must demonstrate to me that you have gone well above and beyond the basic requirements of each assignment:

- You will come to class with questions about assignments and readings, showing that you have thought about the work.
- You will have thought about an assignment and come up with several different ways to do it and will have tried out several approaches before you are done. (I will happily go over different versions or drafts with you, to discuss your decisions and concerns.)
- You will listen carefully and respectfully to others in class and consider how what they say can change how you approach your work.
- You will take active and energetic and engaged part in class discussion, respecting the opinions of others.

All the formal work assignments of class - the projects you turn in on paper and the oral presentations - are polished. You will have proofread your written work, and made sure (by having others read your work before you turn it in) that there are no typos or grammatical problems that will trip another reader: your oral presentations will show that you have practiced before hand so that you can be at ease and as effective as possible for your audience.

It will be very hard to earn an A in this class, and it will also be hard to earn a B: if you do earn either grade, you will have good reason to be proud of yourself and your efforts. Earning a C is nothing to scoff at, either, because I have designed the work of this class to challenge you.

**MTU'S POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

"Academic integrity and honesty are central to a student's education. Ethical conduct in an academic context will be carried forward into a student's professional career. Academic honesty is essential to a community of scholars searching for and learning to seek the truth. Anything less than total commitment to honesty undermines the efforts of the entire academic community. Both students and faculty are responsible for insuring the academic integrity of the University."

The above is a snippet from Tech's mild scare-bomb on academic integrity. You can read the entire section at <http://www.admin.mtu.edu/dos/acadinteg.htm>. We will talk about plagiarism and academic integrity early in the semester. If you have questions about plagiarism, please ask me.

**MTU'S POLICY ON DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT**

MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. If you have a disability and need reasonable accommodation for equal access to education and services at MTU, please contact Dr. Gloria Melton in the Dean's Office (phone: 7-2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may talk with your teacher, your advisor, a department chair, or the Affirmative Action Officer (phone: 7-3310).
BREAK DOWN OF GRADE

25% Participation (this includes attendance, group work participation, in class participation, showing up for conferences, and peer review participation)

20% Smaller Assignments (this includes journal entries, the syllabus response, response questions, etc.)

10% The Rhetorical Analysis of a Persuasive Civic Speech

5% The pitch proposal

10% The research argumentative paper

10% The final project (the product itself)

10% The informative presentation on the final project

10% The final project Report

DIALECTICAL JOURNALS

One of your ongoing assignments in this class is to write a journal response to your readings. I do not mean for these entries to be time-consuming for you. I want you to use them as a means of engaging with your readings. What is a dialectical journal?

Draw a vertical line down the center of your page. On the left side of the line, write a passage from the reading that strikes a chord - either sweet or dissonant - with you. On the right side of the line, comment or ask questions about the passage. I will collect your journals randomly, approximately every 2.5 - 3 weeks. Bring them to every class session and assume that unless I have told you to do something else this is the assignment for the assigned reading of the day.

GRADING ON INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS

I will put grade on your individual assignments. However, you will have the opportunity to improve any grade with which you are unsatisfied. If you ever want to know what grade I think you are earning, come talk. (I will let you know if ever I think you are doing below C-work in class.) At two points during the semester, I will be asking you to do an assessment of the work you have done so far; I consider it part of my responsibility as a teacher to help you learn how to do fair and motivating assessments of your own work. At the end of the semester, you will meet with me individually to determine, through discussion and assessment, the grade you have earned.

A NOTE ON YOUR TIME & THIS CLASS

It is an expectation of this university that for every hour you spend in a class, there will be approximately three hours of time outside of class you will need to spend on the work of the class. Since we meet approximately two-and-a-half hours per week, I am expecting that you will put in, on average over the semester, close to eight hours per week on your work for this class. I have planned assignments with these expectations in mind.

A NOTE ON THIS SYLLABUS & COURSE CALENDAR

Because of the nature and length of this course, the class calendar will evolve in detail throughout the course. You will receive periodic updates of this information, with ample notice of major assignments. In addition, I reserve the right to change this syllabus at any time in response to the needs of either the instructor of the class.