"WHAT BOOKS DO I NEED TO SUCCEED IN THIS COURSE?"
The Non-Designer's Design Book - Williams

"WHY AM I IN THIS COURSE?"
Ever had to write a research paper or review a scientific journal article? Ever had to present your own data to the class? Ever feel like you weren't quite sure how these are done? That's where this university ("UN") course comes in. It's aimed at helping you develop and refine your written, verbal, and visual communication skills so that you can effectively read, effectively discuss, effectively present, effectively compose your ideas, your work. These are fundamental skills you can expect to utilize in the "real world" setting, too. Whether writing journal articles in your field, writing technical instruction manuals for novices, pitching the latest computer model to your boss, or delivering your data to colleagues or city officials, you'll need writing skills, verbal skills, visual skills, critical thinking skills. Much of this class then will be devoted to understanding and critically analyzing the following:

- the interaction of written, verbal, and visual communication;
- the needs and expectations of specific audiences;
- your voice, power, and responsibilities as a writer/composer;
- the context of the work -- how, where, and why the work is being read, viewed, and/or heard.

"WHAT ARE SOME MORE SPECIFIC GOALS FOR US?"

WRITTEN
- The writing process: recognizing that there is a process; learning to analyze and troubleshoot one's own writing process
- The distinction between writing and editing
- Editing for different purposes
- The distinction between an argument and the presentation of the argument
- Transitions in writing
- Writing as choices of words, ethos, tone, style, etc.
- Voice and style
- Citations and bibliographies, according to differing academic standards

VISUAL
- Conventions of layouts for differing contexts: how they develop and learning how to recognize them
- Testing visual layouts with audiences
- Typefaces: categories and conventional uses
- Using words and images together
- Basic conventions of layout
- Using, interpreting, and composing photographs, charts, and graphs
- Making effective overheads: color, type, and arrangement considerations
- Visual style
- Materials of different kinds of visual presentations
ORAL

- Listening: active listening; vocabulary for listening; how to facilitate different kinds of listening in an audience
- Interviewing: understanding how to formulate questions and elicit useful responses; drawing data out of an interview
- The parts of a speech
- Modifying writing for oral presentations
- Oral delivery strategies
- Narration in speeches
- Oral/aural strategies
- Discussion formats (e.g., how sizes of groups affect interaction)
- Strategies for planning informal and formal group discussions

We will also work toward finding answers to these (and more) questions:

What is rhetoric? What are some specific rhetorical concepts? How do these concepts help shape pieces of communication in different ways? Do you think rhetoric is good, neutral, evil...

What is meant by "genre" and "generic conventions"? What different kinds of genre and generic conventions are there? How does genre shape material to meet audience expectations? How does genre help an audience come to a piece of communication with readily shaped expectations?

What makes good communication? To what extent is good communication bound to time, place, ideology, and culture? What are some ethical and cultural dimensions of communication?

What are some principles of design? In what ways can words and images work together to create different effects? In what ways can different parts of an oral, written, or visual text be coordinated? What kinds of appeals can be made?

What is an argument? What do we do with it? What kind of relationship does it assume between people? What are some different options for presenting an argument?

"WHAT'S THE GRADING SYSTEM LIKE?"
My hope is that you find many similarities in the writing and composition processes of your projects, and recognize the links among various modes of communication. In order to make these connections, we will engage in critical analysis on a daily basis, in and out of class.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance / Participation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Responses / Homework</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journals</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Project</td>
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<td>Portfolio</td>
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Coming to all the classes and doing all the work earns you an AB to a B. That is the average I expect from everyone. If you want an A—which stands for exemplary work—you must do more than the minimum. People who will earn an A in this class typically will have:

- attended every class, awake and prepared;
- taken an active role in class, contributing thoughtfully and enthusiastically to discussions and bringing in ideas and techniques they have discovered through their own explorations;
- explored media constantly to include numerous examples per week in their journals, and openly share their findings with the class;
- come to office hours to discuss ideas they have for assignments and projects and to get feedback on work in progress;
- started assignments and projects well ahead of due dates, so that they can get feedback from me and others on their drafts and have time to make revisions;
- handed in completed work in time every time;
- completed extra-credit assignments when they are offered.
You must complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in this course. You will have a chance to revise your work based on the feedback you receive from me and from your classmates. As the course is called “ReVisions,” your effort to draft and revise all assignments will weigh heavily into the portfolio percentage especially. We’ll arrange conferences a couple of times during the semester so we can discuss your standing in the course. Remember that I have an “open-door” policy, meaning, come and talk to me at any time during the semester! I won’t bite... probably...

“What Goes In My Journal?”

Every other Friday, I will be collecting your journals - binders including in-class writings, reading responses, and any materials of interest to you, materials that strike you as important, intriguing examples of the different modes of communication will we study in this course. For example, you might include the lyrics from your favorite song with an explanation of why these lyrics strike you as an effective or ineffective communication piece. You might include a summary of a television commercial, the ad from a magazine, details of a speech or show you attended, an article from the newspaper, a print-out from your favorite or least-favorite website... The possibilities are endless. The point is to get you thinking critically about the written, visual, and oral messages around you, and how they are presented through different media. I’d like you to describe the rhetorical situation for each collection and reflect on why you like or dislike them.

“What If My Work Is Late?”

You have two class sessions to complete any missed reading responses or any in-class journal writings, up to two! After two, I will not accept late work and you will fail the course for not completing all the work.

No major assignments (i.e., bi-weekly journals, editorial, portfolio, etc.) will be accepted late unless there is some major, major emergency. We’ll negotiate an alternative due date.

“Do I Have To Come To Class?”

Yes! Because this course is rooted in developing communication skills, class discussions are vital to your individual success here, and to the class’ development. You should make your best effort to attend all classes so that you may contribute to class discussions and group work, as well as learn from class activities. Remember, too, that you have something to teach me, but only if you’re here!

As the university policy stands, students may miss two classes per semester without penalty. In this course, you will lose two points from your final grade per absence after three absences, and you will fail after five absences. In the unfortunate event of a family or other emergency, please notify me as soon as possible so we can talk about making up missed work. It is your responsibility to see me about missed work.

BONUS! If you attend every class session (and have completed all assignments), I will add two points to your final grade.

NOTE! I reserve the right to revise the syllabus and/or course schedule to better serve student needs. Make sure you check with me or with classmates about changes if you’re absent or if you tune out on me.
"WHERE CAN I GET SOME EXTRA, FREE HELP?"
The Writing Center is a wonderful resource for all students working on any writing or composition assignment, at any stage in your writing process. You don’t have to go to the Writing Center with a draft to get help. Just going to talk to a coach about an assignment can get you generating ideas about your projects - certainly a good start. I encourage you to take frequent advantage of this free help! You can use the Writing Center to:

- work on written drafts at any stage, from brainstorming and revising;
- discuss reading assignments;
- design visual arguments;
- rehearse oral presentations;
- work on using and integrating sources to support your argument;
- discuss documentation / citation;
- prepare applications, resumes, business letters.

Sessions are by appointment and the Center is located in the Walker Arts and Humanities Building, Rm 107. Contact Director Nancy Grimm @ 7-2007 if you have any questions, or consult the Center’s site @ www.hu.mtu.edu/wc/.

"PLAGIARISM WHAT’S THAT?"
I trust that the issues of plagiarism and cheating are something you’ve heard about before; at the same time, I want you to be sure of how seriously I take these academic offenses. They are defined by the university’s policy as “knowingly copying another’s work or ideas and calling them one’s own or not giving proper credit or citation,” and this policy covers copying sections or entire papers from printed or electronic sources, as well as handing in papers written by students for other classes or purchasing academic papers. Plagiarism and cheating are dishonest and cheat you out of learning, the prime reason you are here. If you’re feeling pressured about an assignment or if you’re unclear about citing others’ works, come talk to me before risking suspension, or worse, expulsion. If you ever have questions, see me or consult a coach in the Writing Center.

"WHAT’S THE DEAL WITH DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT POLICIES?"
I’m sure I don’t have to address this problem either, but you should know I absolutely do not tolerate harassment in (or out of) the classroom. We are here to learn from each other, so the utmost respect is expected from everyone.

In addition, 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 call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students (7-2212). For other concern about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department chair, or the Affirmative Action Office (7-3310).