Michigan Technological University

HU 4634

Advanced Practicum in Scientific and Technical Communication:

The Keweenaw Communicators

Spring Semester 2004

Instructor: Ann Brady, Ph.D.
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Department

Extension: 7-2066
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Office Hours: T/R: 1-2:30 PM, W: 11-12:00 noon, Room 329A Walker Arts & Humanities
Course Hours: T/R 11 AM in Walker 108

Required Texts: The Practice of Technical & Scientific Communication
Technical Report Writing Today
User-Centered Technology

Course Description: HU 2600 is designed to broaden your understanding of scientific and technical
communication. Grounded in the knowledge that the best rhetorical theories have to offer, the course
prepares you to write effectively in a variety of contexts and to be aware of the social and ethical
responsibilities you must assume in the workplace.

Course Goals: Scientific and technical documents include a wide range of subjects, goals, information
sources, readers, and circumstances that lead to their preparation. To be successful as a writer in the many
genres that comprise the field, you need to be rhetorically informed and thus able to assess your audience
and identify your own purposes. The course thus focuses on developing your abilities for critical inquiry
and your understanding of transactional composing processes—writing that is used to get things done.

Course Requirements:

1. Readings: I expect you to read the texts assigned in the syllabus before the class session
and to actively discuss in class the topics for a given session. Additional readings may be assigned during
the semester for which you will be responsible.

2. Written assignments: Assignments and due dates are included in this syllabus. Formal
assignments will typically go through a cycle that includes pre-writing or a proposal, a peer-reviewed rough
draft, comments from me, and a final draft.

Peer reviews are essential since they prepare you for the collaborative and critically demanding work of
document production, both in the classroom and the workplace. Since the reviews are a privilege and a
responsibility, use them well. Come prepared, be clear, specific, and complete in your assessment of your
peers' work, and demand the same for your own.

Several of the longer documents will be written independently, others collaboratively. Shorter pieces in the
document cycle will be assigned as homework and will usually be due the next class after they are
assigned. See “Grade” section for point distribution.

Each assignment should be submitted in hard-copy using 12 point font, 1.5-line spaced, with 1” margins on
each side. Please note that I may modify the assignment topics and due dates during the semester.
3. **Portfolios:** Throughout the semester, you should keep a running file of your work, which will serve as the basis for a portfolio you will turn in at the end of the semester. Professional writers use their portfolios to showcase their best work for possible employers and for professional awards. You'll begin yours in this class, watch it grow as you advance through the program, and present it as part of your capstone before you graduate.

4. **Teamed oral reports** You'll be assigned to a two or three member team to investigate a particular area in the profession, based on the Lutz/Storms text. In your report, you should introduce the area, explaining its applications, responsibilities and employment outlook. The presentation should not exceed 10 minutes; you should plan to devote 2 minutes of this time to audience questions.

5. **Academic honesty:** Unless the assignment calls for a collaborative effort, I expect that the work you submit to me will be yours. If you are referring to or using other sources, acknowledge them, using proper form. Evidence of copied or plagiarized work is cause for serious disciplinary action by the University.

6. **Attendance:** I expect you to attend every class meeting and every conference, ready to participate fully and thoughtfully. If you miss more than 10% of our classes and individual meetings, I will drop your final grade. If you must be absent, please contact me via e-mail or speak with me in person.

7. **Grading:** You can earn an A or B in this class if you complete all assignments and reach deadlines, do quality work and show some genuine commitment. You'll earn a C if you meet deadlines with satisfactory effort or if some of your assignments are incomplete. You'll receive a D or F if your assignments are poorly executed or overdue, or if your attendance, participation, or effort is unsatisfactory.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Criteria</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Application letter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teamed oral reports</td>
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<tr>
<td>Document cycle proposals/progress reports</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>IMRD report</td>
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<td>Grant/Feasibility/Other</td>
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8. **Grading standards:**

- **A (truly excellent).** A work is an example of highly effective professional writing. It makes its purposes clear, reflects concern for its audience's needs and responses, and is detailed, persuasive, effectively organized, exhibits appropriate format and tone, and is grammatically correct.

- **B (very good).** B work is effective and would succeed in most professional communication circumstances. It may lack the polish or effectiveness of an A.

- **C (satisfactory).** C work is effective though it lacks features necessary to succeed completely with a professional audience. Its purpose may not be entirely clear, it may not be effectively organized, it may not exhibit an appropriate tone or format, or it entails grammatical errors that make it difficult to read or understand than necessary.

- **D (poor).** D work does not communicate effectively for several reasons. It may display an inadequate understanding of purpose or audience. It may lack information or be unpersuasive. Its organization may be confusing or misleading, and its tone or format may be inappropriate. It may be difficult to understand or contain serious errors in grammar.

- **F (unacceptable).** F work does not satisfy the requirements of the assignment.