UN 2001: Revisions: Oral, Written and Visual Communication

Section: Spring 2004. T-Th-3:35-5pm in Walker 116
Instructor: Julie Estep
Office hours: T TH 2-3:30 in Walker 148, and by appointment
E-mail: jdestep@mtu.edu

Course Description:
Virtually every successful human endeavor hinges upon effective communication. Quality of communication makes or breaks relationships, business partnerships and transactions, marketing efforts, military operations, family dynamics, elections, job searches, funding requests; even classroom interchanges. Revisions is designed to provide participants with an opportunity to examine what it means to communicate effectively in a variety of modes and contexts, and to practice doing it.

Course Objectives: (see also: http://www.hu.mtu.edu/~jdestep/revisions/FAQ.html)
Participants in this course will:

• acquire a wide repertoire of strategies for evaluating and practicing effective communication in several media
• explore different contexts in order to decide which communicative techniques and tools are appropriate to achieve objectives in a given situation
• practice giving and receiving feedback in order to better assess your own and others’ communicative strategies

The assignments for the class have been designed to meet the above objectives. They represent the minimum for which you are responsible. They involve:

Multiple small in-class quizzes.
(At least) 3 major papers/written projects
(At least) 3 oral presentations
(At least) 3 visual design assignments

Required Texts:
• Williams, Robin. The Non-Designer’s Design Book.
• George, Diana and John Trimbur. Reading Culture: Contexts for Critical Thinking and Writing
• Other articles and texts will be provided online.
Special Requirements:

1) All assignments are due in electronic form. Email an attachment of every assignment you complete to jdestep@mtu.edu on or before the due date, and save it in your 'sent' mailbox if possible. This protects you in case an assignment gets lost. Also, keep electronic copies of ALL assignments that you turn in, stored in more than one place.

2) If possible, check email daily for updates and important communiques. On class days, check email between 9am and 3pm.

Important Consideration:

As scholars of Communication, part of the effort of this course will be examining what responsibilities we have in terms of what kinds of culturally powerful communication pieces we investigate and what kinds we avoid or ignore, if any. While analysis never amounts to endorsement, there may nonetheless be graphic or eccentric pieces we analyze in this endeavor of which the “shock factor,” sexual content, political ‘extremism,’ epithets, perceived violence or “hate-speech” may be offensive and/or upsetting to some viewers. (Some of it perhaps should be offensive to a sane viewer.) We will strive to keep academic objectives clear and in the foreground when we critique such pieces, but it is up to you to determine whether such a class is truly feasible for you. Even if you consider yourself extremely limited in your tolerance for certain ideas, depictions or portrayals, the ability to ‘critically examine’ might be all the more important for you. However, because we will be exploring such a diversity of viewpoints and objectives, some of which may be held by fellow class members, it is incumbent upon us all to remain within the bounds of respectful dialogue.

Participation:

Each student is expected to attend class prepared, and to contribute meaningfully to class discussion. Every draft of each assignment must be handed in on its due date, and every assignment must be completed in order to pass the course. No late coursework will be accepted. Notes will be taken in class, and in-class writing may be collected, so bring a writing notebook every day.

Grading:

Attendance and preparation are also crucial to success in this class. Two absences are free, but thereafter, final grades will drop one grade per absence. Missing draft due dates counts as an absence. Class participation, responsible group work and your general level of enthusiasm for the class will be factored HEAVILY into your final grade. Good-faith efforts on written assignments may on occasion be revised to earn higher grades. Grades on oral and group presentations are final.

Final evaluation will encompass grades on written assignments, presentations, and class participation.
• Students permitted two absences, period. Final grade drops one-half a grade per absence thereafter. Lateness (5-20 min) counts as half an absence.
• Missing in-class draft due dates counts as an absence.

MTU Compliance With The Americans With Disabilities Act
MTU complies with all state and federal laws regarding discrimination, including the Americans With disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Students with disabilities should contact the Student Affairs Office for Assistance (487-2212).

MTU's Policy on Academic Integrity
Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offenses and will not be tolerated. MTU's Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as "knowingly copying another's work or ideas and calling them one's own or not giving proper credit or citation," and the 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 not only dishonest but they cheat you out of learning. If you ever have any questions about this issue, or about how to cite someone else's work properly, please talk with me or consult a coach in the Writing Center.