UN 2001 Revisions: Oral, Written, and Visual Communication

Section R10  
Time MWF 3:05-3:55  
Room Walker 144

Instructor Alexa Ducsay  
Office Walker 149  
Office Phone 7-3280  
Email alducsay@mtu.edu  
Office Hours Monday 2:00-3:00, Thursday 1:00-2:00 in Walker 149, and by appointment.

What is Revisions? (and why do I have to take it?)

No matter what your major, profession, or interests, you have been and will be communicating in some form or another for the duration of your natural life. This could be as simple as trying to talk a friend into going to see the movie you’re interested in, or as important as explaining to the company you work for why a product or procedure you’ve been researching is or is not effective. The people who you’re talking to may come from different backgrounds, may have different opinions, or may simply communicate differently from you. This class will help us understand how to work through (or in some cases around) these differences.

Course Goals

The main goal of this course is to expand your skills so that you are prepared to communicate in a variety of situations. To this end, we will be exploring the different aspects of communication, focusing on audience, medium, and process. Through a series of assignments, we will examine the characteristics of different audiences, and how these specific audiences require different methods of communication. By the end of this class, we will have experience in communicating with a variety of different audiences and through a variety of different mediums, skills which you will continue to use throughout your professional and personal life.

Assignments

In the first few weeks of this semester, you will each pick a topic to research. Over the course of this class, we will develop different projects for this topic: proposing it as an article for an academic journal, making a television special out of it, and using it as the basis for designing a high-school textbook on communication. For each of these projects, we will analyze our prospective audience, choose our medium, work out our design process, and go through several drafts. Each project will also involve group work, where we constructively evaluate and respond to one another’s progress. The final project (creating the textbook) will be a group project.
Since an important part of learning to communicate well is reflection on your own progress, we will also have a journal due every two weeks. You may keep your journal as a blog, or use a notebook to keep a handwritten record. You will not be graded on the contents of these, but you will receive credit for turning them in. Failure to turn in journals will lose that credit.

Participation is also a major part of this class. Contributing thoughtfully, using respectful language and demonstrating an interest in class discussions all work towards this part of your grade. As do your evaluations of your classmates’ work.

Part of your final project will consist of a final portfolio of your work in this class. This will include drafts, group work, and final projects, and will be evaluated not only as part of this class, but also as a reflection of the program.

Text

The text will serve as our reference for understanding the process we go through for each project. Parts of it can also be used as prompts for our reflection process.

**Mechanical Resources**
We will not be spending time in class on the mechanics of communication (spelling, grammar, etc.) except to discuss how they are important in the field of communication. Brainstorming and early drafts will not be evaluated on the basis of your mechanics, but rather on how you are communicating your ideas to your chosen audience. This said, final assignments are expected to be mechanically correct based on the parameters we’ve chosen for each one. Find a good dictionary and style manual to refer to when necessary. Below are some links to online resources. I am also always available for questions and will be willing to schedule appointments with anyone who feels they need additional help.

MIRIAM-WEBSTER ONLINE (WWW.M-W.COM)
MLA ONLINE (WWW.MLA.ORG)
The Chicago Manual of Style Q&A ONLINE
(www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/cmsfaq/cmsfaq.html)

**Grading Policy**
We will be working together to develop grading rubrics for each assignment. The criteria we decide on will be provided to you at the beginning of the process. If you wish to revise an assignment, see me and we will decide what is necessary for an effective revision. You must complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in this course.

Percentages break down as follows:
100-94%: A
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- Mirriam-Webster online (www.m-w.com)
- MLA online (www.mla.org)
- The Chicago Manual of Style Q&A online (www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/cmosfaq/cmosfaq.html)

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Percentages break down as follows:

100-94%: A
93-87%: A/B
86-82%: B
81-77%: B/C
76-72%: C
71-64%: D
63% and below: F

Assignments and participation will weigh as follows:
Class participation: 10%
Journals and short assignments: 15%
Journal Proposal: 15%
Television Special: 20%
Textbook: 30%
Final Portfolio: 10%

Attendance Policy
Students are permitted to miss 3 classes per semester; subsequent absences will affect your grade. If you have more than these 3 conflicts for health, academic, or personal reasons, please see me prior to your absence and we will work something out. I will be more understanding of a necessary absence if you handle it responsibly. You are accountable for making up any work you miss as a result of these absences, either by working with your classmates or making an appointment to see me.

MTU’s Policy on Academic Integrity
Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offenses. They are defined by this 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 cover copying section or entire paper from printed or electronic sources as well as handing in papers written by students for other classes or purchasing academic papers. Plagiarism and cheating not only are dishonest but cheat you out of learning, the prime reason you are here. If you ever have questions about this issue, please talk with your instructor or consult a coach in the Writing Center (7-2007).

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 call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students (7-2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department chair, or the Affirmative Action Office (7-3310).
## Schedule of Classes and Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Homework</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M 8/29</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>Reflection email from mtu.edu address about Revisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 8/31</td>
<td>Audience Analysis</td>
<td>Chap. 1 and 2; write a reflection on Walter’s story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F 9/2</td>
<td>Conditions and topics for argument</td>
<td>Read Chap. 3 and 4; develop topic for research; email me proposed topic and schedule meeting to discuss</td>
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| Week 2 | NO CLASS | Schedule meeting with me about research topics | FOR MON. 9/12: Bring in a piece of particularly effective or ineffective written communication; read Chap. 7, pp. 317-326, and Chap. 14 |

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<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Class</th>
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<td>M 9/12</td>
<td>Analyzing written communication</td>
<td>Bring in a piece of particularly effective or ineffective written communication; read Chap. 9 and 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 9/14</td>
<td>Analyzing visual communication</td>
<td>Final drafts of proposals on research topics; read Chap. 8 and focus on pp. 238-245</td>
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<tr>
<td>F 9/16</td>
<td>Analyzing oral communication; research proposals due</td>
<td>Journals due before class Mon. 9/19; write a 2 to 3 page comparison rhetorically analyzing two pieces of communication from different mediums.</td>
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<td>M 9/19</td>
<td>Looking at journals in the library</td>
<td>Read Chap. 3 and 4; find three possible journals for your proposed article and write up a brief (1 paragraph) audience analysis for each</td>
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<td>W 9/21</td>
<td>Discussing statement of purpose and journal proposals</td>
<td>Statement of purpose and rough draft of journal proposal; start looking for interesting televisions specials</td>
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<td>F 9/23</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<td>M 9/26</td>
<td>Group work on proposals</td>
<td>Respond to each proposal you heard today</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 9/28</td>
<td>What problems are you having? Group work</td>
<td>Final drafts of proposals due Fri. 9/30</td>
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<td>F 9/30</td>
<td>Final proposals due; begin discussion TV specials</td>
<td>Be prepared to discuss the TV special you watched; read Chap. 11; journals due</td>
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<td>M 10/3</td>
<td>New medium: TV</td>
<td>Find a TV station to design a special for and write a brief audience analysis</td>
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<td>W 10/5</td>
<td>How do you catch the casual viewer?</td>
<td>Expand audience analysis; review Chap. 8</td>
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- **M 10/10** Group work: pitch ideas
  - Prepare pitch
- **W 10/11** Discussion of visual communication and our projects
  - Respond to each pitch you heard; review Chap. 9
- **F 10/14** Combining visual and audio elements
  - Prepare presentation; review Chap. 7

**Week 8**
- **M 10/17** What are common problems?
  - Work on presentation
- **W 10/19** TBA
  - Work on presentation
- **F 10/21** TBA
  - Work on presentation

**Week 9**
- **M 10/24** TV presentations; form groups for final projects
  - Initial group meetings; review Chap. 3 and 4
- **W 10/26** TV presentations
  - Initial group meetings
- **F 10/28** TV presentations
  - Journals due Mon. 10/31

**Week 10**
- **M 10/31** How do you analyze a textbook?
  - Textbook analysis
- **W 11/2** Breaking a textbook down
  - Final analysis of textbook
- **F 11/4** Class statement of purpose for textbook
  - Work with your group to begin to develop your own statement of purpose

**Week 11**
- **M 11/7** Group work: assign roles
  - Group statement of purpose due Wed. 11/9; re-read Chap. 9 (focus on "strategies" section)
- **W 11/9** Class design plan
  - Group work
- **F 11/11** Group work on progress reports and meetings with me
  - Progress reports; journals due Mon. 11/14

**Week 12**
- **M 11/14** Progress Reports
  - Group work
- **W 11.16** Progress Reports
  - Group work
- **F 11/18** NO CLASS

**Week 13**
- **M 11/28** Discuss final portfolio
  - Group work; portfolio work
- **W 11/30** Textbook design for each section
  - Group work; portfolio work
- **F 12/2** Textbook “extras”; sound, practice exercises, web resources
  - Group work; portfolio work

**Week 14**
- **M 12/5** Presentations
- **W 12/7** Presentations
- **F 12/9** LAST CLASS Presentations
  - Portfolios due TBA

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I reserve the right to revise the syllabus and/or course schedule to better serve the needs of the class.