DESCRIPTION

Written, Visual, and Oral Communication is one of four core General Education classes required of all students at Michigan Tech. Growing directly out of this statement of philosophy, the particular purpose of Revisions is to help you become a stronger communicator so that you can not only be more effective in whatever career you follow but also so that you can be a more effective member of all the communities in which you participate.

To that end, we will not be focusing on the mechanics of communication in this course; instead, we will be examining closely how analyses of the purpose, context, and audience of any communication situation help you think about the most effective choices (including mechanics) to make in designing any piece of communication, no matter the medium. We will also be exploring — and reflecting upon — the particular composing habits and practices that help you strengthen your abilities as much as possible.

In this particular section of Revisions, you will choose a current social issue that matters to you and about which there is much current discussion. Throughout the semester you will conduct various traditional and creative research into the issue you choose. By composing letters, opinion pieces, posters, documentary photography books, and a piece in the medium of your choosing on this topic — as well as by composing an academic research paper — you will learn how to shape communication in different media for different audiences.

When you look at the course calendar, notice these main assignments:

* a letter to the editor on a social issue of your choosing
* a 2-3 minute speech on that issue
* a poster about that issue
* a documentary photography book focusing on your issue
* an argumentative research paper on your issue
* a final group project where you work with 2-3 others on some combination of your topics

We will approach each of these assignments through planning and through multiple drafts (at least 2, if not 3 or 4).

In addition, so that the University can assess the effectiveness of the Revisions course, you are required at the end of the semester to turn in a portfolio of a significant representation of your work throughout the semester. In order for you to be able to create this portfolio, you will need to keep every single piece of work you produce in this class.

GOALS

Through your work in Revisions, you will:

- Learn a rhetorical process for analyzing and producing texts using written, visual, and oral communication.
- Understand how the audience and purpose in any communication situation shape effective communication.
- Analyze and produce a range of (mixed) written, visual, and oral texts in a range of genres.
- Learn how processes of reflection and invention are useful in developing communication.
- Acquire extensive practice in revising written, visual, and oral communication.
• Acquire strategies for testing and assessing your communications.
• Work both alone and collaboratively in learning and communicating.
• Learn how to conduct, communicate, and document research for a substantive piece of
  argumentative communication.
• Seek out multiple points of view on the issue your research in order to learn how your own
  position fits within wider contexts.
• Recognize that, in the context of global cultural diversity, our communication choices are effective
  only when we understand that and how different audiences interpret texts.
• Discuss and analyze the ethical implications of a communicator's choices in a text.

GRADING
For each of the major assignments we will develop together, as a class, a grading rubric for that assignment.
Each rubric lays out the important qualities that each assignment should possess, and so clearly lays out
what you need to attend to in the assignment to do well.

In addition to basing your final grade on the individual grades you earn on the major assignments, I will
also be attending to your participation in class. Because your learning in this class depends tremendously
on you interacting well with others (listening to them, responding thoughtfully to them in speaking and
writing) as well as on your energetic participation in class discussion and activities leading to the
development of your major assignments, these activities will count toward your final grade — which means
that class attendance is very important.

Here is a more detailed breakdown on how I will weight grading:

  a letter to the editor on a social issue of your choosing             10% (100 points)
  a 2-3 minute speech on that issue                                10% (100 points)
  a poster about that issue                                       10% (100 points)
  a documentary photography book focusing on your issue            15% (150 points)
  an argumentative research paper on your issue                    30% (300 points)
  final group project, including oral presentation on the project  15% (150 points)
  class participation                                              10% (100 points)

NOTE that you will not receive a final grade in this class until you turn in the final portfolio.

REVISION OF WORK
If you are not happy with the grade you receive on the final version of any project, you can revise the
project. I will happily accept revisions up until the first day of Finals Week. If you plan on revising a
project, come see me first to discuss how you might proceed.

LATE WORK
I have tried to shape a class schedule that is challenging but with plenty of time to think. Because you will
only do yourself damage if you get behind in this class, I will not accept any late work unless you have
come to see me beforehand and have solid and documented reasons.

ATTENDANCE
If you have more than two absences from class, your grade will be affected. If you miss a class, please do
not contact me to find out what you missed. All assignments are listed on the course Calendar; ask another
person who is taking the class what you missed.

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." This
policy applies to copying sections or entire papers from printed or electronic sources as well as handing in
papers written for other classes or by other students for other classes; it also applies to purchasing academic
papers. Plagiarism and cheating are not only dishonest but cheat you out of learning, the reason you are at
Tech. If you ever have any questions about what counts as cheating or plagiarism, please talk with me or consult a coach in the Writing Center (7-2007).

CALENDAR

WEEK 1
Tuesday, 1/16  Intro to class, class policies
Thursday, 1/18  Respond to Syllabus, Read Introduction & Chapter 1 of cda (pp. 1-30)
                Discuss readings, Choose social issue

WEEK 2
Tuesday, 1/23  Letter to a friend, Read Chapter 2 of cda (pp. 33-54)
                Feedback on letters, Rhetorically analyze letters to the editor
                Develop list of audience expectations, Develop a statement of purpose for a letter to the editor
Thursday, 1/25  Read cda sections of Chapter 3 on strategies of ethos, logos, and pathos (pp. 78-83) and on arrangement (pp. 88-94)
                First draft of your letter to the editor, More rhetorical analysis of letters to the editor
                Develop a grading rubric for the letter to the editor you will write, Feedback to your letter drafts

WEEK 3
Tuesday, 1/30  Read the first part of Chapter 12 of cda (pp. 347-358), Revision of letter to the editor
                Discussion of readings, Respond to letters using rubric
Thursday, 2/1   Read pages 165-166 and 170-185 of Chapter 6, on oral communication, of cda
                Develop design plan for a 2-3 minute talk you will give on your issue
                Discuss analyzing speeches rhetorically; develop a grading rubric for speeches

WEEK 4
Tuesday, 2/6   Read the rest of chapter 3 of cda (pages 60-77, 84-87, 95-103)
                Turn in a revised design plan for your speech
                Discuss chapter 3 and design plans
                Practice your speeches (and choose who will present when)
Thursday, 2/8  No Class, Winter Carnival recess

WEEK 5
Tuesday, 2/13  Read pages 165-189 of Chapter 6, on oral communication, of cda
                Develop criteria for listening and asking questions
                Seven speeches
Thursday, 2/15  If you gave a speech in the previous class, your reflection is due
                Read pages 197-217 of Chapter 7, on visual communication, of cda
                Seven speeches

WEEK 6
Tuesday, 2/20  If you gave a speech in the previous class, your reflection is due
                Read pages 218-233 and 238-246 of Chapter 7, on visual communication, in cda
                Seven speeches
Thursday, 2/22  If you gave a speech in the previous class, your reflection is due
                Read Chapter 9, on posters, in cda
                Reflect as a class on the speeches

WEEK 7
Tuesday, 2/27  Design plan for poster due
                Feedback on design plan; developing a grading rubric for the posters
                Analyzing posters rhetorically
Thursday, 3/1  Mock-up of poster due, Feedback & reflection for posters
Starting to develop a design plan for a documentary photography book

WEEK 8
Tuesday, 3/6  Poster due, Responding to posters
Planning for the rest of the semester
Thursday, 3/8  Read Chapter 10, on documentary photography, in cda
Doing rhetorical analysis of documentary photography
Develop grading rubric for documentary photography book
Design plan for documentary photography book due, Feedback to design plans
3/13 and 3/15  Spring Break

WEEK 9
Tuesday, 3/20  Mockup of documentary photography book due, Feedback to mockups
Discussion of creative research
Thursday, 3/22  Read Chapter 5, pages 127-161, on writing, in cda
Develop a design plan for an argumentative research paper
Develop a grading rubric for the research paper

WEEK 10
Tuesday, 3/27  Finished documentary photography book due
Reflection & Feedback
Looking at the arguments of others: how are arguments made interesting to their audiences?
Thursday, 3/29  Statement of purpose for research paper due, 3 copies
Discussion & feedback
Develop a grading rubric for research paper

WEEK 11
Tuesday, 4/3  Written analysis of someone else's statement of purpose due, 2 copies
Discuss final group projects
Thursday, 4/5  Design plan for research paper due, 2 copies
Feedback
Work on final projects

WEEK 12
Tuesday, 4/10  First full draft of research paper due
Work on final projects
Thursday, 4/12  Design plan for final projects due, including schedule
What are your intentions now with the final argumentative research paper?
Progress report on final group projects

WEEK 13
Tuesday, 4/17  working on final projects
Thursday, 4/19  Final argumentative research paper due
Feedback and reflection

WEEK 14
Tuesday, 4/24  Group presentations of final projects
Thursday, 4/26  Group presentations & feedback  Class closure & reflection

FINALS WEEK
Monday, 4/30  Portfolios due in my office by 9:00 a.m.
Individual Grading Conferences with me