HU 2600: Introduction to Scientific and Technical Communication

Quick links: [Course Calendar | Assignment Descriptions and Handouts]

Instructor: Jim Nugent  
Email: jdnugent@mtu.edu  
Phone: 487-3273  
Office: Walker 142  
Office Hour: Monday after class (just pull me aside), and by appointment any time.

Course Description

HU 2600 is an introduction to the history, theory, and practice of scientific and technical communication. Grounded in rhetorical theory, the course prepares you to write effectively in a variety of contexts, examines the professional identity of technical communicators, and prepares you to consider the social and ethical responsibilities of technical communication in practice.

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 communicator in such a dynamic field requires not a static and formalist understanding of communication genres, but rather a reflective command of the practical and theoretical underpinnings of communication and persuasion more broadly.

The course thus has two goals:

1. It teaches you what scientific and technical communication is, how it differs from the conventional writing that is typically taught in high school and college; and
2. It teaches you how to think rhetorically and to produce effective documents for and within a variety of audiences, purposes, and contexts.

Required Textbooks

- Other readings will be provided

Course Policies

- I expect regular, timely attendance from all students. More than three unexcused absences will result in your final grade being dropped by one letter (for example, B becomes C, AB becomes BC, CD becomes F). Also, any absences or tardiness will reflect poorly on your social practices when I determine your social practices grade. Because of the social and collaborative nature of HU 3120, in-class work generally cannot be made up—even if the absence is excused.
• If you fail to sign the attendance sheet on a given day, it will count as an unexcused absence.

• You are responsible for providing a replacement if I lose your work. This doesn’t mean that I will make a policy of losing your work—all it means is that you should keep a saved copy of the major assignments on hand, and be prepared to offer a copy should the unthinkable happen.

• When working collaboratively, your group is responsible for sharing the most current versions of your work. (You may want to get in the habit of emailing your group’s most current drafts to everyone at the end of each work day.) Technology excuses are generally not viable in this class.

• Late assignments are generally not accepted.

• I expect all work in this class to meet the standards of the university’s Academic Integrity Policy.

• I reserve the right to revise this syllabus throughout the semester.

Assignments

There will be five major assignments in this class, listed below, which are due on the dates appearing on the course calendar:

1. Working Writers Assignment
2. Communication Assessment Report
3. TBA
4. Lutz/Storms Presentation
5. Portfolio

Grading

I will give letter grades (A, AB, B, BC, C, CD, D, or F) for all graded assignments in this class. The final grade is determined as follows:

15% Working Writers Assignment
15% Communication Assessment Report
15% TBA
15% Lutz/Storms Presentation
15% Portfolio
15% Social Practices—This grade will reflect your contributions to class discussions, peer review activities, and group work, as well as your commitment to submitting timely and complete work. Needless to say, if you are not in class regularly and on time, you are not participating, so this grade will also partially reflect your attendance.

10% Small Assignments

ADA Notice

MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable
accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students, 487-2212. For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department chair, or the Affirmative Action Office at 487-3310.
HU 3120: Technical and Scientific Communication

Quick links: [Course Calendar | Assignment Descriptions and Handouts]

Instructor: Jim Nugent
Email: jdnugent@mtu.edu
Phone: 487-3273
Office: Walker 142
Office Hour: Tuesday after class (just pull me aside), and by appointment any time.

Course Description

Technical and Scientific Communication is a study of written and oral communication in technical, scientific, and professional environments. It emphasizes audience, writing processes, genres of scientific and technical discourse, visual communication, collaboration, professional responsibility, and clear expression.

Required Textbook and Readings

- Additional readings will be provided.

Course Policies

- I expect regular, timely attendance from all students. More than two unexcused absences will result in your final grade being dropped by one letter (for example, B becomes C, AB becomes BC, CD becomes F). Also, any absences or tardiness will reflect poorly on your social practices when I determine your social practices grade. In-class work generally cannot be made up—even if the absence is excused.
- If you fail to sign the attendance sheet on a given day, it will count as an unexcused absence.
- You are responsible for providing a replacement if I lose your work. This doesn’t mean that I will make a policy of losing your work—all it means is that you should keep a saved copy of the major assignments on hand, and be prepared to offer a copy should the unthinkable happen.
- When working collaboratively, your group is responsible for sharing the most current versions of your work. (You may want to get in the habit of emailing your group’s most current drafts to everyone at the end of each work day.) Technology excuses are generally not viable in this class.
- Late assignments are generally not accepted.
- I expect all work in this class to meet the standards of the university’s Academic Integrity Policy.
- I reserve the right to revise this syllabus throughout the semester.

Assignments

There will be five major assignments in this class, listed below, which are due on the dates listed in the course calendar.
The five major course segments are as follows:

1. Resume and Cover Letter
2. Instructions
3. Case Study
4. Reading Science and Technology
5. Portfolio

Grading

I will give letter grades (A, AB, B, BC, C, CD, D, or F) for all graded assignments in this class. The final grade is determined as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Resume and Cover Letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Case Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Reading Science and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Portfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Social Practices—This grade will reflect your contributions to class discussions, peer review activities, and group work, as well as your commitment to submitting timely and complete work. Needless to say, if you are not in class regularly and on time, you are not participating, so this grade will also partially reflect your attendance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ADA Notice

MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students, 487-2212. For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department chair, or the Affirmative Action Office at 487-3310.