Belonging in the World / Being a Stranger in Our Own Countries
UN 2001 Revisions (R09): Written, Visual, and Oral Communication
Fall 2006

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Revisions Description, general

UN 2001, one of four core classes that the MTU General Education Curriculum requires all undergraduates to take. This course is designed to help you develop and strengthen your comprehensive communication abilities. We will help you have a better understanding of why, how, when, where, and to whom you produce your communications so that you can make your communications more appealing, effective, and successful. Through your work in Revisions class, we want to achieve the following goals:

• 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 their 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.
• On the issues they research, seek out multiple points of view in order to learn how their own positions fit 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.

Description of this section of Revisions

In 1800 it could take 5 weeks to cross the ocean from Asia to North America; by 1900, because of steam engines, the journey was reduced to 5 days. Now it is just a long flight.

In 1800, the only way for someone in China (for example) to stay in touch with someone in the United States was by letters that traveled on those 5 week journeys back and forth. Now we pick up the phone.

This comparative ease of travel and communication — combined with changing economic and political conditions — means that if we are to be effective citizens and workers, we all must be comfortable communicating well with people who have grown up in conditions different from our own. This means not only that we must be able to reach out to others but that we must understand our own assumptions and preconceptions about what counts as effective communication: if we do not understand how our assumptions and preconceptions shape us, then we cannot understand when they get in the way of our communicating with people shaped by other assumptions and preconceptions.

In this particular section of Revisions, we will examine our assumptions and preconceptions about our own communication practices. It will be as though we are strangers from another planet figuring out what allows humans to get along in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan in fall 2006.

Textbook

Grading and other class notes

Your final grade in this class will depend on seven major projects as well as on a series of smaller assignments and on your class participation. Here is how your grade will be determined:

Major assignments: 60% of total grade
Rhetorical analysis (1) 5%; Group research paper on some aspect of American culture 10%; Rhetorical analysis (2) 5%; Instruction set of an American group/organization 10%; Poster on Happiness 5%; Oral presentation on happiness 10%; Final Portfolio 15%

Smaller Assignments: 20%
These are assignments such as your response to the syllabus, design plan, progress report, revision plan, reflection papers, etc.

Class participation: 20%
This grade will be determined based on your attendance and participation in class discussions.
A ≥ 92% 92% > AB ≥ 87% 87% > B ≥ 79% 79% > BC ≥ 74%
74% > C ≥ 66% 66% > CD ≥ 60% D = 60% F < 60%

* Look at the course schedule for due dates for all assignments.

Here are some other notes on class policies:
• You must complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in this course.
• I will gladly write to you at your MTU email account, but not at others. Using your MTU account is a sign of your professionalism.
• I usually check my emails every other day. If you have audio/video needs for a presentation in our class or need to discuss an absence, you need to get in touch with me at least 2 days ahead.
• Save all the written assignments and drafts you develop for all assignments: you must include these in the portfolio to be turned in at the end of the semester.
• For the assignments that require drafts, I will only accept final work that has developed out of those drafts.

Attendance
Because of the highly collaborative nature of this course, in which you will need to get and use lots of feedback from others through peer review, discussion, and group research, your presence in class matters. You are permitted only three absences during the whole semester; beyond three absences, your grade will be lowered. Sleeping, talking or laughing, talking on your cell phone, or text messaging in class count as being absent as well, even though you might be physically present. If you know you will be absent, let me know beforehand and bring me the work due on that date ahead of time; if you do not bring me the assignment beforehand, it will be considered late. You are always responsible for any work you miss in the class you miss. I’m much more forgiving of absences if you are responsible about the situation.

Late Assignments
I do not accept late assignments unless you’ve come to me at least a week beforehand to talk about the possibility of turning in an assignment late. Any late assignments will affect your final grade.

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).

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 a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education and services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students (7-2212). If you have other concerns about discrimination, please contact your advisor, department chair, or the Affirmative Action Office (7-3310).

CLASS SCHEDULE
Using Written Communication to research differences in how we communicate (Group work)
Week 1  M 9/04  Labor Day
W 9/06  Introduction to class
  Assignment: Syllabus response and read pages 34-51 of cda, on design plan
F 9/08  K-Day
Week 2  M 9/11  Talk about syllabus and reading
  Due: Syllabus responses
  Assignment: Bring an object (that combines words and pictures) that you think typifies some aspect of American culture.
W 9/13  Talk about the objects that you bring to class
  Assignment: First draft of rhetorical analysis (1) and read pages 320-326 of cda, on rhetorical analysis
F 9/15  Discuss reading
Week 3  M 9/18  Peer review
  Due: First draft of rhetorical analysis (1) (Bring TWO copies to class!)
W 9/20  Develop ideas for research paper and decide groups
  Due: Final rhetorical analysis (1)
  Assignment: Read chapter 6 on research, pages 143–174, in cda
F 9/22  Decide research topic and research questions
  Assignment: Design plan and sources for research papers
Week 4  M 9/25  Bring some of the sources for research papers to class
  Due: Design plan
W 9/27  Conferences
F 9/29  Conferences
Week 5  M 10/02  Due: Progress Report
W 10/04  Work in groups
F 10/06  Due: First draft of group research paper
Week 6  M 10/09  Receive the feedback and work on the revision plan
W 10/11  Revise research paper
  Due: Revision plan
F 10/13  Work in groups
Using Written and Visual Communication together to consider differences in how we communicate: Developing instructions for culture (Group work)
Week 7  M 10/16  Movie
  Due: Final group research paper
  Assignment: Reflection on group research paper
W 10/18  Movie
  Due: Reflection on group research paper
  Assignment: Bring an instruction set (that combines both words and pictures) to class
F 10/20  Analyze instruction sets
  Assignment: Rhetorical analysis (2)
Week 8  M 10/23  Peer review
  Due: First draft of rhetorical analysis (2) (Bring TWO copies to class!)
W 10/25 Work in the lab  
Assignment: Read chapter 12 of cda (pages 381-396) and Instruction set of a group or organization to which you belong

F 10/27 Decide groups, develop ideas, and discuss readings  
Due: Final rhetorical analysis (2)

Week 9 M 10/30 Fieldwork for pictures of instruction set  
Assignment: Fieldwork report

W 11/01 Fieldwork reflection (Bring pictures that you plan to use to class.)  
Due: Fieldwork report

F 11/03 Peer review  
Due: First draft of instruction set (Bring TWO copies to class!)

Week 10 M 11/06 Peer review  
Due: Final instruction set

F 11/10 Assignments: Read chapter 10 of cda, on posters (pages 329-343) and bring one of the posters that you like or dislike.

Using Visual and Oral Communication to consider differences in how we communicate: What is happiness?

Week 11 M 11/13 Discuss why you like or dislike the poster you brought.  
W 11/15 Develop ideas for posters  
Assignment: Poster on Happiness

F 11/17 Peer review  
Due: Sketch of poster  
Assignment: Read chapter 8, pages 223-260, in cda

Enjoy your Thanksgiving Break!

Week 12 M 11/27 Discuss reading and sign up for oral presentations  
Due: Final version of poster

Assignment: Reflection on the oral presentation and poster

W 11/29 Oral presentations on posters — happiness (class-graded)

F 12/01 Oral presentations on posters — happiness (class-graded)

Week 13 M 12/04 Oral presentations on posters — happiness (class-graded)

W 12/06 Oral presentations on posters — happiness (class-graded)

F 12/08 Receive feedback on oral presentations  
Due: Reflection on the oral presentation and poster

Week 14 M 12/11 TBA

W 12/13 Due: Final portfolios

F 12/15 TBA

No Final for this class — so enjoy your break!

NOTE: I reserve the right to revise this syllabus and schedule to better serve student needs.