Technical Communication (HU3120)

Course Policies

Absences/ Tardiness
You're allowed 3 absences. Each additional absence reduces your overall course grade by half a grade point. I reserve the right to mark you "absent" under the following conditions:

- excessive tardiness
- failure to participate in class (see below)
- failure to bring annotated assigned readings
- excessively disruptive behavior

Academic Integrity
Plagiarism and cheating are perhaps the most serious academic offenses. 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. If you have questions about this issue, or about how to cite someone else’s work properly, please talk with me or consult a coach in the MTU Writing Center before you risk turning in the paper in which you think you may have inadvertently plagiarized.

Books/ Syllabus
Print, read and annotate, then bring your assigned readings to class, and to any appointment with me. You cannot meaningfully engage a text without recourse to it. Failure to bring your assigned readings suggests that you're not willing to participate and engage in the larger conversation by which the class, as a community, primarily learns. This will lower your overall course grade if it happens repeatedly.

Conferences
Conferences are amazingly productive—likely the largest source of growth beginning writers make is from conferencing with instructors and other writers. I encourage you to meet with me as much as you need during the semester. Make sure to bring assigned readings and your writing with you to our conferences, of course. In addition, the MTU Writing Center is recognized nationally. Seriously, it's one of the best in the country. It's a wonderful (and free!) place for you to work on your writing with accessible, friendly and smart writing tutors. You can “drop in” or set up a weekly appointment.

Discrimination & 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
Emailing the Professor
You must have email in this course and must have the ability to check your email regularly (at least as many times during the week as the course meets) throughout the semester for email updates from me on course happenings/syllabus corrections, etc. You may and should email me with class-related questions at any time and I'll try to get back to you within a day or two. However, it is never appropriate to email any instructor with questions such as “What did we do in class today?” These are best directed to your fellow students, the numbers and email addresses of whom you should get at the beginning of the semester.

Grading
Important: I do not grade your papers based on the improvement they show from draft to final project. First drafts should be your best work so that you make the most growth before turning in the final paper. I can’t stress this enough. Also, if a draft is not “fully realized” (i.e., your best effort) I may not accept it. Egregious proofreading and other types of errors are likely to lose you credit on the assignment. Think of it this way: When you turn in a draft you should be able to say, “This is the best I can do at this time and now I need another, perhaps more experienced composer to have a look and make some suggestions for further revision…”

Keep Copies
Make sure to keep a copy of EVERY SINGLE PIECE of composing you do in this class, especially work on which I’ve commented. This is your responsibility.

Late Papers
I don’t accept anything late. In-class/improptu assignments cannot be made up. Work will be considered on time when it is turned in to me in class, on the day it is due appropriately “composed.” This includes being stapled or paper-clipped if necessary. Please note that although a doctor’s note (and the like) doesn’t excuse a tardy project, I do understand that everyone has a bad day now and then. For this reason, I allow everyone to turn in one late assignment without penalty. You can either send the assignment to me on email or bring it to our next class. However, note that the paper may be no more than 5 calendar days late (you need to be thinking about the next project by that time). After this period, the option expires and you receive no credit for that assignment.

Office Hours
Office hours are by appointment only. I’m as flexible as my schedule allows—I’m even willing to meet you on the weekend if we can’t arrange a time to meet during the week. I’m also happy to chat by phone and to answer questions by email. See me after class and we’ll compare calendars and set up a time to meet. However, I don’t work in my office at school and so you shouldn’t expect to randomly find me there.

Participation
I do not assign a percentage of your grade for participation per se. However, grading as I do on the University grading scale…
...should your grade fall on a grade pole (e.g., 3.00), I reserve the right to move you up (or down) into the next category based on my evaluation of your overall performance in the class. It sort of works like this: Your grade comes in at a 3.0 even. I then think to myself, are you really more of an A/B student or a B student. Then I remember how you dominated class and shut people down, OR how you never had your book, slept in class, etc. and I think, “Well, an ‘AB’ student would have had better social practices…” I decide this component, then, by thinking about whether you’ve helped or hindered the class’ progress, not how often you speak up in class. I recognize that there are many ways to “participate” usefully—it’s about being a member of this community. If you have questions about how to participate interestingly and usefully in class, I encourage you to conference with me on this.

**Traveling Athletes**

While I respect the dedication of traveling athletes and agree that sports can be an important part of a liberal education, I can’t grant special favors or shift deadlines for traveling athletes. Though I can’t exceptions when it comes to work due, I’ll accept your work early and will cut you some slack on the absences.