COURSE DESCRIPTION

HU3120, Technical and Scientific Communication, serves advanced undergraduate students who either intend to pursue a career in technical communication or who will use forms of scientific and technical communication during the course of their professional and personal lives: that’s you. The general purpose of this course is to prepare you for the kinds of professional communication (primarily writing) that you will do in your career, although the skills that you learn will be applicable outside of your professional community as well. More specifically, this course is designed to assist you in developing strategies for:

- planning, drafting, and revising your writing, individually and collaboratively;
- writing for a variety of audiences and purposes;
- creating online and/or oral presentations;
- designing your documents visually;
- editing and reviewing your own work and the work of others; and
- communicating in an ethically responsible manner.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- This syllabus.
- Other readings will be provided.

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Dr. Marika Seigel
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Office hours MTWR 2:00 – 3:00 & by appointment

BASIC EXPECTATIONS

I expect you to complete all components of the four major course projects: job application package, recommendation report cycle, instruction set cycle, and a final portfolio. **N. B.: You must complete all of these assignments to receive a passing grade in the course.**

I also expect you to attend class every day, do the reading and other daily assignments and have all course materials with you, and to participate actively in discussion (especially since we have a small class this summer).

Finally, I expect you to be honest, courteous, and professional.
COURSE CALENDAR, SUMMER 2008

The following calendar is meant to give you a rough guideline for what we will cover when in this course. Topics and due dates are subject to change. I will give you daily reading and writing assignments each day in class—if you are absent, please find out from a classmate what you missed; absence is not an excuse for failing to complete an assignment.

Week 1

Mon. 06.30: What is Technical Communication? What is rhetoric?
Tue. 07.01: Introduce resumes.
Wed. 07.02: Introduce rhetorical analysis memos.
Thu. 07.03: Rough draft workshop: job application package.

Week 2

Mon. 07.07: Resume and analysis memo due. Introduce recommendation report cycle.
Tue. 07.08: Causal analysis and the “Crane Case.”
Wed. 07.09: The rhetoric of reports.
Thu. 07.10: Teamwork.

Week 3

Mon. 07.14: What counts as research and criteria for decision making?
Tue. 07.15: Crane Case and report writing, continued.
Wed. 07.16: Rough draft workshop #1 (report body)
Thu. 07.17: Rough draft workshop #2 (complete report)

Week 4

Mon. 07.21: Recommendation report due. Introduce instruction set cycle.
Tue. 07.22: What is usability?
Wed. 07.23: Think aloud protocols & usability testing.
Thu. 07.24: International & intercultural communication.

Week 5

Mon. 07.28: Instruction Mock-Up due. Expert evaluation.
Tue. 07.29: More usability testing.
Wed. 07.30: More usability testing.
Thu. 07.31: Rough draft workshop: Usability report.

Week 6

Mon. 08.04: Usability report due. Work on instructions in class.
Tue. 08.05: The rhetoric of presentations, or, “Is PowerPoint EVIL?”
Wed. 08.06: Instruction sets due. Client presentations today or tomorrow.
Thu. 08.07: Introduce portfolio

Week 7

Mon. 08.11: Portfolios and professionalism.
Tue. 08.12: Portfolios, continued.
Wed. 08.13: Rough draft workshop, portfolio.
Thu. 08.14: Portfolios due. Course wrap-up and evaluations.
POLICIES AND GRADING

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 contact Dr. Gloria Melton in the Dean's Office (phone: 7-2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may talk with me, your advisor, a department chair, or the Affirmative Action Officer (phone: 7-3310).

MTU'S POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Plagiarism and cheating are 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. Plagiarism and cheating are not only dishonest but they cheat you out of learning. If you ever have any questions about this issue, or about how to cite someone else's work properly, please talk with me or consult a coach in the Writing Center.

ATTENDANCE & TARDINESS: You are expected to attend class every day, to be on time, and to have your textbook, syllabus, and all your work with you. Because this class is so dependent active and engaged discussion, it is crucial that you attend every class period and that you are prepared to discuss the reading. If you are sick or have a previously arranged commitment let me know in writing, preferably through the Office of Student Affairs. In addition to affecting your participation grade, consistent lack of attendance ("excused" or "unexcused") can result in the loss of an entire letter grade for the course. You are responsible for any homework assigned and due on days you are absent.

In this course, as in the working world, you must turn in your work on time. All projects are due at the beginning of class on the dates indicated on the syllabus or given in class. Assignments turned in late will be penalized 1/2 letter grade per day (B to BC, C to CD) unless you have made other arrangements with me in advance.

GRADING: When grading each of your assignments, I will ask one overriding question: "Does this document do its job successfully?" That is, would your communication have the intended effect on the reader you are addressing?

I will, of course, recognize the difference between a competent performance (a "C") and good and excellent performances ("B" and "A"). A competent performance is one that stands a chance of succeeding; an excellent performance is one that seems assured not only of success but also of winning praise:

A superior: the work is of near professional quality. The document meets or exceeds all the objectives of the assignment. The content is mature, thorough, and well-suited for the audience; the style is clear, accurate, and forceful; the information is well-organized and formatted so that it is accessible and attractive; the mechanics and grammar are correct.

B good: the document meets the objectives of the assignment, but it needs improvement in style, or it contains easily correctable errors in grammar, format, or content, or its content is superficial.

C competent: the document needs significant improvement in concept, details, development, organization, grammar, or format. It may be formally correct but superficial in content.
D marginally acceptable; the document meets some of the objectives but ignores others; the content is inadequately developed; or it contains numerous or major errors.

F unacceptable; the document does not have enough information, does something other than the assignment required, or it contains major errors or excessive errors.

Your final grade will be determined by the grades you receive on written and in-class assignments as well as on class participation, according to the following weighting:

- Resume and analysis memo: 15%
- Recommendation report cycle: 20%
- Instruction set cycle: 30%
- Portfolio: 15%
- Class participation/daily work: 20%