GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION:

HU 3120: Technical and Scientific Communication serves advanced undergraduate students pursuing either careers in technical communication or who will be using technical communication in their professional or academic careers. The aim of this course is to prepare you for the kinds of technical writing and other communication that you will do in your career. HU3120 should have long-reaching consequences as well—many of the skills and situations you encounter in this class will be applicable outside your professional community.

The general purpose of this course is to prepare you for writing that you will do in your career. The specific goal, however, is to assist you in developing strategies for:

- planning, drafting and revising technical writing
- writing for a variety of audiences in different genres
- working with a team to produce a series of major documents
- creating presentations
- working with basic visual design on technical documents
- editing and reviewing the work of others

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:


In addition to this textbook, you will be provided with supplemental readings such as handouts, or will be asked to download PDF files or visit certain webpages (links will be provided).

MAJOR PROJECTS (60% of your total grade):

1. Instruction Set & Usability Test (10%)
   You will design and create a document that provides information for an everyday user to complete a series of technical tasks. In addition, you will also conduct rhetorical analysis of your user and design and conduct a usability test. (To be completed individually).

2. Technical Report (10%)
   You will write a report for your department head or IT coordinator that identifies problems and makes recommendations for your home computer lab. (To be completed individually).
3. Job Application Documents (10%)
   You will design and compose a résumé and cover letter in order to apply for a specific job advertisement. (To be completed individually).

4. Major Document Cycle (30%)
   Using your refined communication skills, you will identify a major problem on Michigan Tech's campus, research and make recommendations for a solution, write a proposal for a manual or set of policies that helps solve the problem, and give a presentation to make your recommendations to members of Michigan Tech's administration. (To be completed with a team, with some individual requirements).

5. Technical Communication Portfolio (10%)
   Using the documents you have written for this class as samples, you will design and compile a professional portfolio that displays your skills as a technical communicator. (To be completed individually).

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS (20% of your total grade):

From time to time, you will be asked to complete short assignments that will give you practice working with particular genres of technical communication or else will contribute to a portion of a major project. Homework may include, but are not limited to, any of the following:

- email reports or proposals for projects
- memos that explain rhetorical processes
- rough drafts of project components
- progress reports
- short recommendation reports
- brief written proposals
- personal reflection papers

Homework assignments will be graded on a √+, √, √- system.

CLASSROOM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION: Treat this class as you would a professional work environment. You are expected to arrive on time to class every day having read all assigned course materials and able to actively participate in classroom discussion. You will receive a daily participation grade on a √+, √, √- system that will total 10% of your total grade. Unprepared students will lose a portion or all of their daily participation grades. Likewise, excessive absences will negatively affect your grade, regardless of your final project score, except in the case of "university excused absences" (i.e. traveling sports teams, family crises, medical emergencies), or a doctor's note. If you must miss a class, please explain your reason in a brief memo explaining the circumstances, regardless of the situation. You must make up all missed work on your own—assignments and class notes will not be provided to you. "If you know that you will be missing a class ahead of time, talk to your instructor and make arrangements to turn in any homework or projects before the due date.

PROJECTS & ASSIGNMENTS: According to the professional nature of this class, all projects and assignments must be typed, given to me as physical copies (do not e-mail me assignments unless you are told to do so), and turned in on time. Late homework assignments will be given a "zero." Late projects will be penalized one whole grade per day late.

DROP BOX: From time to time, I will ask you to drop off drafts or assignments in a drop box or folder. This drop box will be located outside your instructor's office door (Walker 148).

COURSE READINGS: Complete all readings on or before the date that they are due for in class discussion. It is your responsibility to engage the material and use the textbook information for your benefit, even if the readings are not always covered in lecture.
CONFERENCES: Over the course of the semester, you may encounter projects that require a conference with your instructor to discuss the status of your work. Approach these conferences as you would an on-the-job meeting: be on time (i.e. early) and prepared to discuss your work. I also encourage you to initiate your own conference times with me during your instructor’s office hours to share ideas and receive critical feedback for your work.

MITU'S POLICY ON DISCRIMINATION AND HARRASSMENT: MITU 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 MITU, 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).

MITU'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.

GRADING: At the most fundamental level, your instructor will be grading your projects by looking at how successfully your documents meet the objectives and goals of the assignment. Meeting objectives, however, is only the first step—in order to receive high marks, you must also exceed expectations by doing work that stands out as demonstrating superior ability and knowledge of the rhetorical situation of each project.

GRADING SCALE:

A  93-100  Never fails to meet requirements, always exceeds expectations
AB  88-92  Never fails to meet requirements, consistently exceeds expectations
B  83-87  Never fails to meet requirements, occasionally exceeds expectations
BC  78-82  Consistently mediocre, never exceeds expectations -OR- sometimes exceeds expectations, but sometimes fails to meet requirements
C  73-77  Occasionally exceeds expectations but more often fails to meet requirements
CD  68-72  Never exceeds expectations, occasionally fails to meet requirements
D  63-67  Consistently fails to meet major requirements
F  0-62  Fails to meet any major requirements

GRADING WEIGHT:

Instruction Set & Usability Test 10%
Technical Report 10%
Job Application Documents 10%
Major Document Cycle 30%
Technical Communication Portfolio 10%
Homework Assignments 20%
Participation 10%

INSTRUCTOR'S NOTE: Teaching is a process of constant revision; therefore, your instructor reserves the exclusive right to make changes to this syllabus and course calendar as dictated by the specific needs of this class.
Weekly Course Calendar
HU3120 – Technical and Scientific Communication
Summer Session, Track B, 2008

*Readings are due the day they are listed for discussion.

**Week 1: Introductions, Rhetorical Theory, Instruction Sets**
*Read: Chapters 1 & 8

*Homework Due Tuesday:* read E-mail Etiquette Article; write a short e-mail proposal for your Instruction Set Project.

T July 1: *Discuss Ch. 1; analyze sample instruction sets.
*Homework Due Wednesday:* write a short memo that analyzes your user and task

W July 2: Lego exercise in lab; *discuss Ch. 8.
*Homework Due Thursday:* work on your Instruction Set Rough Draft

R July 3: *Discuss Ch. 8. Lab time for work on Instruction Set Rough Draft

*F July 4: Drop off Instruction Set Rough Draft in my box no later than 5PM

**Week 2: Designing and Testing Technical Documents**
*Read: Chapters 5 & 9

M July 7: *Discuss Ch. 5; analyze document design.

T July 8: *Discuss Ch. 9; discuss usability testing.
*Homework Due Wednesday:* design a Usability Test for your Instruction Set.

W July 9: Practice Usability Tests and make revisions
*Homework Due Thursday:* prepare Final Usability Test

R July 10: Conduct usability tests in class.
*Homework Due Monday:* Final Instruction Set Project; *read sample memos

**Week 3: Writing Technical Prose**
*Read: Chapters 2 & 7

*Homework Due Tuesday:* visit your department’s computer lab & write a brief memo that documents your initial observations; *read Sand-Jensen article

T July 15: *Discuss Sand-Jensen article & Ch. 7
*Homework Due Wednesday:* begin writing your Technical Report

W July 16: Recommendation writing exercise in lab.
*Homework Due Thursday:* Technical Report Rough Draft (bring 4 copies)

R July 17: In-class review of Technical Report Rough Drafts.
*Homework Due Monday:* Final Technical Report Project
**Week 4: Technically Communicating Yourself: Job Application Documents**

*Read: Chapter 4

- **M** July 21: Analyze sample job application documents

  *Homework Due Tuesday:* Résumé Rough Draft (bring 4 copies)

- **T** July 22: Review document design; in-class review of Résumé Rough Drafts

  *Homework Due Wednesday:* Cover Letter Rough Draft (bring 4 copies)

- **W** July 23: *Discuss Chapter 4; in-class review of Cover Letter Rough Drafts

- **R** July 24: Lab time to work on Final Résumé and Cover Letter

  *Homework Due Monday:* Final Résumé and Cover Letter; *read Ch. 3

**Week 5: Researching Technical Topics, Writing Proposals**

*Read: Chapters 3 & 6

- **M** July 28: Introduce Major Document Cycle Project; *discuss Chapter 3; form teams & assign tasks; work on Gant Chart

  *Homework Due Tuesday:* Gant Chart & memo documenting each team members’ duties and responsibilities; begin research; *review sample proposals

- **T** July 29: *Discuss Chapter 6; analyze sample proposals

- **W** July 30: Lab time for research & Proposal writing

- **R** July 31: Lab time to work on Proposal

  *Homework Due Friday:* Final Proposal Due

  *F* Drop off Proposal in my box no later than 5PM

**Week 6: Preparing Technical Prose for the Public**

*Read: Chapter 11

- **M** August 4: Use feedback from proposals to begin writing Recommendation Report & User Manual

  *Homework Due Tuesday:* Recommendation Report & User Manual

- **T** August 5: Lab time to work on Recommendation Report & User Manual

- **W** August 6: *Discuss Chapter 11; *discuss articles on presentations; lab time to work on Recommendation Report & User Manual

- **R** August 7: Begin working on Presentations

  *Homework Due Friday:* Recommendation Report

  *F* Drop off Recommendation Report in my box no later than 5PM

**Week 7: Presenting Technical Information, Wrap-Up**

- **M** August 11: Test User Manual; Work on Presentation

  *Homework Due Tuesday:* User Manual; Presentation Practice

- **T** August 12: Class time for Presentation Practice

- **W** August 13: Presentations

- **R** August 14: Feedback; Wrap-Up