Revisions: Visual, Oral & Written Communication

UN2001 Section R03 – Fall Semester 2007

Basic Information

Class Information: Meets MWF 9:05-9:55 p.m. in Walker 144.
Instructor’s Name & Office: David Clanaugh, Walker 148.
Instructor’s Office Hours: Monday 10-12 a.m., Tuesday 12:30-1:30 p.m., and by appointment
Instructor’s Phone & Email: 487-3279; daclanau@mtu.edu – I will typically reply to your emails within 24 hours – put a subject line referencing the class and topic. I cannot guarantee responses to non-MTU email addresses.
Class List: The class list is clanaugd@mtu.edu. Check your email each day for late breaking class news.

Drop Off Assignments: I have a mailbox in the Humanities Department Office adjacent to Walker 319.
Late Assignments: I will not accept late assignments except in the most extenuating of circumstances such as major illness or death of a loved one. You will need to consult with me and provide some information about these or other serious circumstances. I will not accept assignments via email unless I specifically ask for this type of format. In any case I must have a hard copy of your assignments.

Required Textbooks:
  o There may be occasional supplementary readings available through the class list.

Course Overview... “Awareness is the essence of intelligence” [J. Dewey]

Underlying Assumptions:
This course is grounded on the proposition that “People cannot NOT communicate.” The real issue, therefore, is whether we choose to communicate in a mindful and skillful manner with awareness of and attention to the wide variety of audiences, contexts, mediums, and purposes we encounter in our personal, social and professional journeys. We are meaning-seeking and meaning-creating creatures; the communication technologies, methods and strategies we use to create and discover meaning have many nuances with significant impacts on how we experience and convey meaning.

A parallel proposition is that communication is an imprecise and fluid process – with technologies, methods and strategies constantly evolving in ways that the products of communication can never can be exhaustively defined or fully understood. For example, go back and read something you wrote as a high school freshman and you will quite likely find yourself asking questions like, “Did I write that? Did I mean that? What is it that I really meant?” Therefore we need to approach communication with a sense of humility and humor knowing that our processes and products will have a life of their own, and can yield an ever-changing variety of interpretations.

Does this mean that we throw our hands up in despair and give up trying to communicate effectively and clearly? NOT AT ALL!! As human beings there is something intrinsic in each of us that leads us to seek connection – to commune – with one another through sharing what we are experiencing and learning during our life journeys.

Purposes & Goals:
Individually and together we can become more aware, mindful and skillful as communicators, and thus experience a sense of satisfaction and success about our efforts to connect, share and learn through communication.
During this course we will work (and play) with various modes of communication (visual, written, oral and multimodal) to become more effective in how we conceptualize and compose our communications. To become more effective communicators requires that we become comfortable with the idea that we can constantly improve our work through reflection and revision.

During this class we will analyze examples of communication through the concepts of context, purpose and audience. We will also develop our rhetorical skills (in the positive sense) to examine how communications can use (in various combinations) reasoned, logical arguments (logos), appeals to emotion (pathos), and shared worldviews or ethical perspectives (ethos). Utilizing group and individual communication experiments and assignments (some graded, some not graded, yet all required), we will move beyond merely analyzing the communication processes and products of others to ourselves becoming more effective rhetorically adept communicators.

Because the goal here is your personal and professional growth, there will be on-going opportunities to tailor course experiences, activities and projects to your personal interests and goals. Whatever interests and goals you pursue after this course, your enhanced communication skills afterwards will help you better achieve academic, professional and personal success.

**Course Work**

**Assignment Sequences:**

There will be three extended assignment sequences during this semester:

- **Sequence One** (all elements due by late September) will focus on visual representation and design, yet will also have room for written and oral aspects. This project will involve developing a poster, flyer or brochure to promote an event, address an issue, communicate about an organization and its work, or present yourself or a classmate to an audience for a specific purpose.

- **Sequence Two** (all elements in early November) will involve a written group research project about a local or regional issue (current or past) primarily addressed through at least two difference print media (including the Web). You can enhance this research by including visual and oral media such as TV or radio, but written media (as it also contains decisions about and use of images, graphics and design) must be primary. Each team member will produce a distinct persuasive opinion piece about the issue after the group has produced a report based on news reporting and analysis. This sequence will provide a great chance to use the library and public archives.

- **Sequence Three** (with individual presentations and all work due the weeks of Dec. 3 & 10) will be a multimodal research project and presentation to integrate your learning during the semester and “showcase” your skills.

Each assignment sequence will be broken down into smaller parts that will promote a process orientation to create your “final” product. These small parts will include: research proposals and plans, rhetorical analyses, journaling peer reviews, oral presentations, and post-project reflections. To receive a passing course grade, you must complete all assignments. I will consider creative variations on these basic assignment ideas within the first week - you must make an office appointment so that we can reach agreement on how you will proceed.

**Final Portfolio:**

The University assesses the effectiveness of the Revisions course through on-going review of a cross-section of anonymous portfolios. Your portfolio will contain all the assignments you did for the class (either the actual assignments or a discussion of those that are not practical to be included in the portfolio’s reflective cover letter). **Purchase and bring a three-ring binder to our second class, and begin placing copies of all your work in it, including the assignment guidelines. More information will be provided later. Due 4 p.m. on Friday, December 14.**

**Class Participation (outside as well as during class through journaling and peer interaction):**

Our work together will benefit greatly from an atmosphere of collaboration and active involvement by all students in this class. Individual and group successes go hand in hand, mutually reinforcing each other. As a result, your engagement and participation are vital whether through active listening, sharing your point of view, asking thoughtful questions, and providing respect and encouragement to your colleagues.
Take at least three times each week to use your JOURNAL to reflect, free write, and develop your ideas through three to five paragraph dated entries. I will review journals three times during the semester. This journal will be assessed only on the basis of whether you make the minimum number of entries; feel free to journal more frequently than the minimum. DO NOT UNDULY WORRY ABOUT SPELLING, GRAMMAR, PUNCTUATION & MECHANICS!! Also feel free to recount out-of-class conversations you have with fellow students about what you are learning, solving problems, developing your ideas, and so forth. I will provide more information about journaling Week Two of the semester. Journals are due the final day of class.

Complete your assigned readings on time (including journal entries about those readings) and bring your textbooks to class. And by the way, there is no bell-shaped distribution of grades that I hope to see at the end of this class! There is no greater satisfaction to me than to have each student feel successful the final day.

Grading:
It is possible to earn 1000 points in this class distributed in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation and Social Practices</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment Sequence #1 (visual representation project)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment Sequence #2 (print media research/persuasion project)</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment Sequence #3 (multimodal research project)</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journaling</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Portfolio</td>
<td>100</td>
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TOTAL POINTS: 1000 points

Your Final Letter Grade will be based on the following scale:

- A: 1000-930
- AB: 929-870
- B: 869-810
- BC: 809-750
- C: 749-690
- CD: 689-630
- D: 629-580
- F: 579 and below

**Policies**

**Attendance and Communication Policy:**
Everyone brings unique gifts, points of view and interests to this class; working together helps everyone reach their goals. **We need everyone present on a consistent basis to help us make the most of this learning experience.** Your absence (physical or otherwise) not only hurts you, it hurts your fellow students.

This said, "real life" (whether a humdinger assignment due in another class, a friend who needs your support during a really rough week, a screaming need to take a day off to regain your balance) sometimes requires that we occasionally miss a class. As a result, you are permitted three unexcused absences. After that each unexcused absence will lower your grade 50 points. Sleeping, text messaging, and so forth qualify as absences... and please turn off your cell phones before you pass through the portals of this classroom. Three tardies will also qualify as an absence, with each additional tardy being another absence.

Excused absences must be documented and will be handled on a case-by-case basis. **If you know you will be absent (excused or unexcused) please notify me by email or phone message as soon as possible.**

**Syllabus Content and Course Schedule:**
I reserve the right to revise the syllabus and/or schedule of work to better serve student needs and course objectives. My goal is to stay as close as possible to major assignment due dates.

**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," and this 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 also cheat you out of learning, the prime reason you are here. If you have questions about this issue, please talk with your instructor 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 American 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 call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students (7-2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact you advisor, department chair, or the Affirmative Action Office (7-3310).