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

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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.

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 and I will also post them to the Blackboard calendar—if you are absent, please visit the course site on Blackboard (www.blackboard.mtu.edu) or find out from a classmate what you missed; absence is not an excuse for failing to complete an assignment.

Week 1

Mon. 05.11: What is technical communication? What is rhetoric?
Tue. 05.12: Introduce resumes.
Wed. 05.13: Introduce rhetorical analysis memos.
Thu. 05.14: Rough draft workshop: Job application package.

Week 2

Mon. 05.18: Resume and analysis memo due. Introduce recommendation report cycle.
Tue. 05.19: Causal analysis and the “Crane Case.”
Wed. 05.20: The rhetoric of reports.
Thu. 05.21: Teamwork.

Week 3

Mon. 05.25: No class: Memorial Day
Tue. 05.26: What counts as research and criteria for decision making?
Wed. 05.27: Rough draft workshop #1 (report body)
Thu. 05.28: Rough draft workshop #2 (complete report)

Week 4

Mon. 06.01: Recommendation report due. Introduce instruction set cycle.
Tue. 06.02: What is usability?
Wed. 06.03: Think aloud protocols & usability testing.
Thu. 06.04: International & intercultural communication.

Week 5

Mon. 06.08: Instruction Mock-Up due. Expert evaluation.
Tue. 06.09: More usability testing.
Wed. 06.10: More usability testing.
Thu. 06.11: Rough draft workshop: Usability report.

Week 6

Mon. 06.15: Usability report due. Work on instructions in class.
Tue. 06.16: The rhetoric of presentations, or, “Is PowerPoint EVIL?”
Wed. 06.17: Instructions sets due. Client presentations today or tomorrow.
Thu. 06.18: Introduce portfolio

Week 7

Mon. 06.22: Portfolios and professionalism.
Tue. 06.23: Portfolios, continued.
Wed. 06.24: Rough draft workshop, portfolio.
Thu. 06.25: 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. 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. NB: If you are texting, surfing, reading the newspaper, etc., during class, I will consider you to be absent. When you are in my class, I expect you to be present and engaged. 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 letter grade per day (B to C, B to D) 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: 25%
- Instruction set cycle: 30%
- Portfolio: 10%
- Class participation/daily work: 20%
about rhetoric

The meaning of the word "rhetoric" seems to differ depending on how the word is used and who's using it. You've probably heard politicians some time or another dismiss the positions of their opponents as "mere rhetoric." You're probably also familiar with the idea of a rhetorical question—a question that is meant to make a point and not meant to be answered.

But rhetoric, as we use it in this class, means something different. Rhetoric is simply the ways in which we try to persuade a given audience, for a given purpose.

So what does that mean? It's a simple idea, but once you begin to see it, you can find rhetoric acting everywhere there is an audience, and a someone trying to make a point with that audience. Here are some classic (and some would say less-than-reputable) examples of rhetoric:

- When a politician tries to get you to vote for them, they are using rhetoric.
- When a lawyer tries to move a jury, they are using rhetoric.
- When a government produces propaganda, they are using rhetoric.
- When an advertisement tries to get you to buy something, it is using rhetoric.
- When the president gives a speech, he is using rhetoric.

But rhetoric can be much subtler (and quite positive) as well:

- When someone writes an office memo, they are using rhetoric.
- When a newspaper offers their depiction of what happened last night, they are using rhetoric.
- When a scientist presents theories or results, they are using rhetoric.
- When you write your mom or dad an email, you are using rhetoric.
- And yes, when I'm trying to explain about rhetoric, I'm using rhetoric.

Rhetoric throughout most of history referred to the arts of speechmaking and oratory. In this class, we will use it to refer to persuasion that occurs through any medium, not just text or speech. Through this semester, we will start to see all communication as rhetorical—that is, as a set of deliberate, strategic decisions that someone made to achieve a certain purpose with a certain audience. You will also learn how to develop effective rhetorical strategies for your own communication.

the rhetorical triangle

The rhetorical triangle is a way of thinking about what's involved in any communication/persuasion scenario. It involves (no surprise here) three main parts:

- a rhetor (a speaker, writer, painter, blogger, photographer... someone who performs the rhetoric),
- an audience (the people that the rhetor addresses), and
- a purpose (the thing the rhetor wants to accomplish with the audience).
An important part of the rhetorical triangle is that these three “variables” are mutually interdependent: in successful rhetoric, each of them must be reconciled and made appropriate to the other two. The purpose, for instance, must be appropriate to the rhetor and what that rhetor is capable of achieving with the audience. Similarly the audience must be appropriate to the rhetor and the rhetor’s purpose. And finally, the rhetor has to be appropriate for the purpose and the audience.

Perhaps examples would help here. Say I am the rhetor, and my audience is my boss. I want to make more money, so I make it my purpose to get a raise. However, that purpose has to be reconciled between factors regarding who I am as a rhetor (am I credible or well-liked? am I worth the money?) and who my boss is (is she generous and understanding? Does she even have the money to give?). If I make it my purpose to make $1 million a year, I’m not likely to be met with much success. Therefore I must reconcile my purpose to what is possible—given both who I am as a rhetor and who my audience is. I should probably make my purpose more realistic by asking for a more reasonable amount of money.

In the same scenario, I also have to make sure my audience is appropriate to my purpose. It doesn’t make any sense, for instance, to address anyone without any control over my salary (like the guy on the bus, the janitor, or some other person’s boss). Rather, I need to talk to people with the ability—either directly or indirectly—to effect my purpose.

And of course, the rhetor has to be appropriate to the audience and the purpose. Having my sister ask my boss for a raise for me wouldn’t likely work. Or if who I was changed—if I just won the lottery, for instance—I wouldn’t likely be successful making the case for more money either.

Now, what if I could go to my boss and say that the vast majority of people in my line of work were making $1 million a year, and I should be making that much as well? Or, by contrast, what if I lived in a culture where it was considered shameful to ask your boss for a raise? These things would go beyond just the immediate players in the rhetorical triangle, and extend to something that surrounds all of it: context.
Context refers to anything from outside of the immediate rhetorical situation that also determines the shape of the rhetoric. This can include what comprises "appropriateness" in the situation (what the ancient Greeks would call to prepon). Examples include:

- how similar rhetorical situations have been addressed in the past, and how they are expected to be addressed in the future (in technical communication, this may include the expected format or genre of the document, the manner of address, etc.);
- expectations for what counts as effective persuasion in a rhetorical situation (in a science journal, for instance, there are very specific rules for what counts as a credible claim—rules that are vastly different from, say, a letter to your mother); and
- "ground rules" and traditions for what you can and can’t do (for instance, PowerPoint slides aren’t allowed in a presidential debate, it’s generally considered improper to speak ill of the dead, and you should probably wear shoes to a court date).

Context also encompasses the timeliness of rhetoric (or what the ancient Greeks would call kairos). Even with all other "variables" in the rhetorical situation remaining the same—the audience, the purpose, and the rhetor—the timeliness of an act of rhetoric alone can determine it’s success or failure. For instance, if your purpose was to convince the U.S. government to relax standards for airline passenger screening, your odds of success would vary tremendously depending on whether you offered your argument in the year 2000 or in the year 2002.
the zombie apocalypse had not gone well. now, to tell the truth, there had been an awful lot of sex in that basement for the first couple months.

and who could blame them? they were all highly photogenic twentysomethings in designer jeans, and at any moment the steel doors could give way, and the flesh eating wave would be upon them.

but such things can only go on for so long before someone's feelings get hurt, and only so much longer before everyone starts to get bored.

and with no television or music or even a deck of cards, things got pretty boring pretty quick.

besides, Annie was starting to show, and they were getting dangerously close to their last crate of canned peach halves in heavy syrup.

and the rest of the world wasn't looking too hot either.
5. Click the Libraries Used tab to see which libraries are referenced in the document.
6. Click OK to save changes and format your citations and bibliography.

**NOTE:** You do not have to verify each tab every time you format. If all you want to do is change the output style, choose Format Bibliography, select the output style on the Format Bibliography tab, and click OK.

### Adding Styles to the Output Styles List

The bibliographic style selected on the Format Bibliography dialog determines how EndNote formats the citations in your paper and the references in the bibliography. The style takes care of text styles, punctuation, and sorting required for the citations and bibliography, as well as which fields are included in the bibliography.

You can use Format Bibliography to select a different style and reformat your document at any point.

**If you do not see the style that you want to use listed in the Output Style list:**

1. In EndNote, go to the Edit menu, choose Output Styles, and then select Open Style Manager.

2. Find the style that you need.
   - You can quickly select a style by typing its name, or scroll through the list to find what you need.
   - Click on the column headings to sort the styles by either name or category. Click a second time to reverse the sort order.