HU3120: Technical and Scientific Communication

Summer 2009: Section R06
MTWR: 11:05 am – 12:20 pm
134 Walker Arts & Humanities

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Office Phone: 487-3280 (during office hours)
Office Hours: MTWR 10:00 am - 11:00 am, or by appointment

GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION:

HU3120: 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 also be rewarding in the long term—many of the skills and situations you encounter in this class will be applicable outside your collegiate and 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
- designing instructional and/or procedural documents

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:


In addition to this textbook, you will be provided with supplemental readings such as handouts, electronic files, or links to online resources.

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, with your books and handouts, having read all assigned course materials and able to actively participate in classroom discussion. 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). You are allowed two (2) “free” absences. Each absence thereafter will lower your participation grade by 10 points. Two late arrivals or unprepared “incidents” equals one absence.
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.

**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.

**DUE DATES:** According to the professional nature of this class, all projects and assignments must be turned in as typed, paper copies (do not e-mail me assignments unless you are told to do so), and turned in no later than 3:00 pm on the day they are due. **Late assignments will lose 25% of their points for each day late.** (Example: A 100-point assignment, two days late, will lose 50 points). *You must complete all assignments in order to receive a passing grade in this class.*

**DROP BOX:** From time to time, you will be asked 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 149).

**KEEP IN TOUCH:** Check your MTU e-mail account each day before class. Your instructor will use the class e-mail listserv (hu3120_r06-l@mtu.edu) to communicate vital information such as changes in meeting locations or class cancellations. Please feel free to use this listserv to communicate with the class as a whole.

**GROUP WORK:** Many of the projects and assignments in HU3120 will require elements of group work. Being able to work effectively as part of a team is an integral skill to master, so you will not be permitted to “go alone.” **Conflicts happen, but you will be expected to resolve them as a group.** Only in extremely difficult situations will your instructor serve as a mediator between a group and an individual or individuals. Occasionally, your instructor may see it fit to give different grades to different group members if there is overwhelming evidence that certain group members are not participating to the standards set by the group.

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES:** Academic regulations and procedures are governed by University policy. Academic dishonesty cases will be handled in accordance the University’s policies. If you have a disability that could affect your performance in this class or that requires an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, please see me as soon as possible so that we can make appropriate arrangements. The Affirmative Action Office has asked that you be made aware of the following:

"Michigan Tech complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at Michigan Tech, please call the Dean of Students Office, at 487-2212. For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head or the Affirmative Action Office, at 487-3310."

Also be aware of the following statements and resources:

Academic Integrity: [http://www.studentaffairs.mtu.edu/dean/judicial/policies/academic_integrity.html](http://www.studentaffairs.mtu.edu/dean/judicial/policies/academic_integrity.html)
Affirmative Action: [http://www.admin.mtu.edu/aao/](http://www.admin.mtu.edu/aao/)
Disability Services: [http://www.admin.mtu.edu/urge/studenthandbook/student_services.html#disability](http://www.admin.mtu.edu/urge/studenthandbook/student_services.html#disability)

**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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A 930-1000</td>
<td>Never fails to meet requirements, always exceeds expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB 880-920</td>
<td>Never fails to meet requirements, consistently exceeds expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B 830-870</td>
<td>Never fails to meet requirements, occasionally exceeds expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC 780-820</td>
<td>Consistently mediocre, never exceeds expectations -OR- sometimes exceeds expectations, but sometimes fails to meet requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 730-770</td>
<td>Occasionally exceeds expectations but more often fails to meet requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD 680-720</td>
<td>Never exceeds expectations, occasionally fails to meet requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 630-670</td>
<td>Consistently fails to meet major requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F 0-620</td>
<td>Fails to meet any major requirements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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GRADING WEIGHTS & ASSIGNMENT BREAKDOWN (1000 pts total):

Technical Correspondence (75 pts) (Week 1)
- Formal E-mail (25 pts) (Due Tuesday, Week 1)
- Formal Memo (25 pts) (Due Wednesday, Week 1)
- Formal Letter (25 pts) (Due Thursday, Week 1)

Recommendation Report & Presentation (100 pts) (Week 2)
- Recommendation Report (75 pts) (Due Thursday, Week 2)
- Presentation (25 pts) (Due Monday, Week 3)

Instruction Set (125 pts) (Week 3)
- Audience & Task Analysis Report (50 pts) (Due Tuesday, Week 3)
- Prototype & Peer Review (25 pts) (Due Thursday, Week 3)
- Final User Instructions (50 pts) (Due Monday, Week 4)

Document Cycle (400 pts) (Weeks 4-6)
- Individual Proposal (50 pts) (Due Wednesday, Week 4)
- Gantt Chart (25 pts) (Due Monday, Week 5)
- Progress Report (25 pts) (Due Thursday, Week 5)
- User Manual Prototype (25 pts) (Due Monday, Week 6)
- Usability Test (25 pts) (Due Monday, Week 6)
- Project Pitch (50 pts) (Due Wednesday, Week 6)
- Client Report (100 pts) (Due Thursday, Week 6)
- Final User Manual (100 pts) (Due Thursday, Week 6)

Job Application Documents (150 pts) (Week 7)
- Résumé (50 pts) (Due Thursday, Week 7)
- Cover Letter (50 pts) (Due Thursday, Week 7)
- Interview (50 pts) (Due Wednesday / Thursday, Week 7)

Classroom Practices (150)
- Attendance (75 pts) (2 "freebies," -10 pts thereafter for each absence)
- Preparedness & Participation (75 pts) (-10 pts per "incident")

*DISCLAIMER: 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 w/ Carpenter
Section R06 - Summer Session, Track B - 2009

**Week 1: Introduction to Technical Correspondence**

*How Do I Write Technical Correspondence? See Woolever Ch. 9*

**M** June 29: Introductions & Overview
   *Homework Due Tuesday: Read Woolever 9-29. E-mail Assignment.*

**T** June 30: Lecture: The Technical Writer’s Situation
   *Homework Due Wednesday: Read Woolever 54-75; Read Sample Memos; Memo Assignment*

**W** July 1: Discuss Sample Memos, Language, & Ethics
   *Homework Due Thursday: Read Woolever 111-135; Letter Assignment (BRING 4 COPIES)*

**R** July 2: Editing Technical Writing for Style
   *Homework Due Monday: Read Woolever 30-53*

**Week 2: Reporting Recommendations / Document Design & Presentations**

*How Do I Write Reports? See Woolever Ch. 13
*How Do I Give Presentations? See Woolever Ch. 17*

**M** July 6: Analyzing Recommendation Reports; Lab Time to Begin Writing
   *Homework Due Tuesday: Woolever 76-110; Read Online Articles*

**T** July 7: Discuss Document Design; Watch & Discuss Presentations
   *Homework Due Wednesday: Read/Watch Presentations (online)*

**W** July 8: Discuss Presentation Strategies; Lab Time to Prepare Presentations
   *Homework Due Thursday: Recommendation Presentations*

**R** July 9: Presentations
   *Homework Due Monday: Final Recommendation Report*

**Week 3: Writing Instructions and User Guides**

*How Do I Write Instructions? See Woolever Ch. 10
*How Do I Describe/Summarize Technical Information? See Woolever Ch. 11*

**M** July 13: Analyzing Instruction Sets; Introduction to Eureka! Project
   *Homework Due Tuesday: Individual Audience & Task Analysis Report*

**T** July 14: Time to Work on Eureka! Project
   *Homework Due Wednesday: Read Johnson Article (pdf)*

**W** July 15: Discuss Usability; Work on Eureka! Project
   *Homework Due Thursday: Prototype Instruction Set*

**R** July 16: Peer Review of Prototypes; Brainstorm Usability Issues
   *Homework Due Monday: Final Eureka! Product User Guide*
**Week 4: Researching Technical Information / Proposing Solutions**
*How Do I Write Proposals? See Woolever Ch. 14*

**M** July 20: Introduction to User Manual Project; Form Groups & Brainstorm  
_Homework Due Tuesday: Read Sample Proposals_

**T** July 21: Discuss Proposals; Lab Time for Research  
_Homework Due Wednesday: Individual Proposals_

**W** July 22: Proposal Review & Selection in Groups  
_Homework Due Thursday: Woolever 136-156_

**R** July 23: Discuss Collaboration; Class Time to Plan  
**Homework Due Friday: Gantt Chart (e-mailed as PDF)**

**Week 5: Collaborative Prototyping**
*How Do I Write Fliers, Brochures, & Newsletters? See Woolever Ch. 16*

**M** July 27: Review Document Design Strategies, Reports, and Manuals  

**T** July 28: Lab Time  

**W** July 29: Lab Time  
_Homework Due Thursday: Progress Report_

**R** July 30: Discuss Product Pitch Strategies; Lab Time  
_Homework Due Monday: User Manual Prototype; Usability Test_

**Week 6: Testing, Reporting, & Pitching User Manuals**
*How Do I Write Executive Summaries? See Woolever Ch. 12*

**M** August 3: Usability Testing Day  

**T** August 4: Lab Day for Revision  
_Homework Due Wednesday: User Manual Product Pitches_

**W** August 5: User Manual Product Pitches  
_Homework Due Thursday: Final User Manual; Client Report_

**R** August 6: Introduction to Job Application Documents; Lab Time for Finding and Analyzing Job Ads  
_Homework Due Monday: Résumé Rough Draft + Job Ads_

**Week 7: Communicating You: Job Application Documents**
*How Do I Write Résumés and Cover Letters? See Woolever Ch. 18*

**M** August 10: Résumé review. Review sample cover letters.  
_Homework Due Tuesday: Cover Letter Rough Draft; Read Interviewing Article_

**T** August 11: Cover Letter Review. Discuss Interviewing Skills.  
_Homework Due Wednesday/Thursday: Prepare for Interview_

**W** August 12: Interviews  

**R** August 13: Interviews. **ALL JOB APPLICATION DOCUMENTS DUE IN DROP BOX.**