Course Description
According to a study by the University of Pittsburgh's prestigious Katz Business School, communication abilities are integral to virtually all industries and professions. In a survey of recruiters from companies with more than 50,000 employees, researchers found that the ability to think critically, write and speak effectively, and work well in diverse environments was considered “the main factor” in job promotion and success. What holds for business managers holds for professionals across the public and private sectors, including health care, education, government, sports, entertainment, and technology.

MTU is sometimes generalized as an “engineering school.” Interestingly, according to the U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Outlook Handbook (2008-9), the engineering profession, like all others, is increasingly seeking people who are “creative, inquisitive, analytical, and detail-oriented,” and who are “able to work as part of a team and to communicate well, both orally and in writing.” Researchers from the Pratt School of Engineering at Duke University, in a recent (2007) study of globalization’s impact on the profession, noted that graduates from U.S. programs were favorably reviewed by multinational companies for their “strong communication skills … and sense of creativity and desire to challenge the status quo.”

Developing these important real-world abilities is a central objective of this course. By acquainting us with the technical art of rhetoric, Revisions will provide us with strategies aimed at meeting the demands of academic and professional communities. We will learn how to read, analyze, and ultimately produce texts—in a variety of genres—that are engaging, audience-centered, and persuasive. We’ll study how to apply logical, ethical, and emotional communication strategies to situations requiring the thoughtful attention and action of others. Much of our work in this class will focus on the role technology plays in such a process. By working collaboratively and on an individual basis, we’ll interpret cultural artifacts with the intention of assessing their purpose, both intentional and unintentional. Most importantly, we’ll practice improving our written, spoken, and interpretive abilities with an eye toward achieving success as citizens and professionals.

Your Graduate Teaching Instructor
Kevin Cassell (BA, University of Maine, 1986. MA, Northeastern University, 1989)
- 146 Walker. Hours: Monday 2-3, Thursday 3:30-4:30
- Contact: 487-3275. krcassel@mtu.edu.
- MTU Website: www.hu.mtu.edu/~krcassel/. Personal: www.kevincassell.com

Required Textbooks
- Reading Culture: Contexts for Critical Reading and Writing. (George, D. & Trimbur, J.) 6th Ed. 2007
Grades
A (100-95), AB (94-88), B (87-83), BC (82-78), C (77-73), CD (72-68), D (67-63), F (62-0). The quantitative breakdown is as follows:

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<th>Activity</th>
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<td>Personal Presentation</td>
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Course Policies

Attendance: You are allowed to miss three class meetings per semester. For each unexcused absence beyond that, your final grade will be lowered by 4 points. If you have five absences, say, and a final grade of 88 (AB), that number will be reduced by 8 points to an 80 (BC). Coming to class late will also result in a reduction (2 points per lateness) of your final grade. Please attend class regularly and on time.

Portfolio: This course culminates with a portfolio—a project that showcases your best work of the semester. Hence, you must save all your work (drafts, revisions, papers, grading rubrics). Don’t throw anything out.

Americans with Disabilities Act: Michigan Technological University 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 MTU, 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.

Your Graded Assignments: Please meet all deadlines and submit hard copies of your graded assignments; email submissions are not possible. Late work will result in a lower grade. Extra-credit work may not be submitted for a higher grade; however, extensive revision of written assignments may be submitted with a request for a new grade.

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offenses. They are defined by MTU’s policy as “knowingly copying another’s work or ideas and calling them one’s own or not giving proper credit or citations.” This includes 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. In this class you are to avoid plagiarism at all costs.

Cordiality and respect: In this class, we will touch on issues that you may have strong feelings about. You are encouraged to express your opinions and share the reasons why you have them. But please be careful not to disrespect others who may not share your views. Be cordial and respectful at all times. Please do not whisper to or chat with classmates, yawn loudly, or groan with displeasure while your instructor or peers are talking. If you are unhappy with the instructor or others in class, please don’t convey your displeasure rudely; instead, share your feelings with the instructor after class. In addition, cell phones, Blackberries, iPods, PDAs, and other electronic devices are not to be used in the classroom and should be turned off before each session.
Affirmative Action: 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.

Syllabus: I reserve the right to revise portions of this syllabus to better serve students' needs. Revisions will be posted on my MTU website.

The Writing Center
MTU's award-winning Writing Center has a staff of well-trained coaches who are willing to meet with you to read and discuss your work. These coaches are available to meet with you by appointment or on a walk-in basis. Students go to the Writing Center to discuss their topic ideas, rehearse oral presentations, and get feedback on their written assignments. It is located in 107 Walker. Its hours of operation may be found on its website: http://www.hu.mtu.edu/wc/index.htm. To make an appointment, please call them at 7-2007.

Online Discussions
Throughout this semester, you will be expected to participate in our on-line discussion group. All forms of writing except personal journal writing are public; the kind of writing you do in this university—academic writing—is also considered public (because you write for an audience, in all cases your professors). Our on-line discussion group will provide you with an opportunity to share ideas and opinions publicly with your peer colleagues. It also provides us with a space to address issues that we may only "touch" on in class (or not even get into in class).

The discussion group is informal. Please don’t be crude or rude. You will not be graded on spelling or grammar but on your consistent participation and the quality of your postings. In the Discussion Group you may both begin a discussion topic ("Compose A Message") or respond to another's topic ("Reply"). You are required to initiate at least one discussion topic that gets more than three replies this semester.

In order to access the course web page, do this:
(1) Go to: http://mtu.courses.edu
(2) Click "MTU ISO LOG IN"
(3) Enter your ID information and log in
(4) Click UN 2001 Revisions.
(5) Under Course Tools, click "Discussions" and follow directions from there.

Notebook Writings
You will be asked to write several responses (to readings, issues, questions) both in class and for homework. These may be handwritten and kept in your course notebook. Unless told otherwise, each response written outside of class should be a page in length. Although you will not hand them in after class, you will be expected to have them with you to read aloud if necessary. At midterm, these handwritten responses will be passed in for a grade, and you will revise and type up at least five of them for inclusion in your course portfolio. You may, if you like, type your responses instead of writing them out in longhand; just be sure you print out and bring a copy of them with you to class.