TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC COMMUNICATION – HU3120.R06
Fall 2009, Room 116 Walker, T R 2:05 – 3:20 pm

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.
- Daily readings will be posted as pdfs on the course’s Blackboard site: www.blackboard.mtu.edu. Make sure you check the calendar and readings folder regularly for updates.
- If you would like to purchase a technical communication handbook for reference, I recommend Kirstin Woolever’s Writing for the Technical Professions (3rd or 4th ed.)

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Dr. Marika Seigel
Assistant Professor of Rhetoric and Technical Communication
Office: 320 Walker Arts & Humanities Center, MTU
Email: maseigel@mtu.edu
Phone: 906.487.3093
Office hours MTWR 1:00 – 2:00 & by appointment

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

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

Tue. 09.01: What is technical communication? What is rhetoric?  
Thu. 09.03: Introduce resumes.

Week 2

Tue. 09.08: Introduce rhetorical analysis memos  
Thu. 09.10: Rough draft workshop: Resume and Rhetorical Analysis Memo.

Week 3

Tue. 09.15: Resume and analysis memo due. Introduce recommendation report cycle.  
Thu. 09.17: Causal analysis and the “Crane Case.”

Week 4

Tue. 09.22: The rhetoric of reports  
Thu. 09.24: Communication and project management

Week 5

Tue. 09.29: Attend Career Fair @ SDC; 1-page “trip report” about experience due Thurs  
Thu. 10.01: Career fair “trip report” due. Visual rhetoric.

Week 6

Tue. 10.06: Review sample report  
Thu. 10.08: Rough draft workshop #1 (report body)

Week 7

Tue. 10.13: Rough draft workshop #2 (complete report)  
Thu. 10.15: Recommendation report due. Introduce instruction set cycle.

Week 8

Tue. 10.20: What is usability?  
Thu. 10.22: Think aloud protocols & usability testing.

Week 9

Tue. 10.27: Instruction Mock-Up due. Expert evaluation.  
Thu. 10.29: More usability testing.

Week 10

Tue. 11.03: More usability testing.  
Thu. 11.05: Rough draft workshop: Usability report.
Week 11

Tue. 11.10: **Usability report due.** Work on instructions in class.
Thu. 11.12: Group work

Week 12

Tue. 11.17: Client presentations today or tomorrow.
Thu. 11.19: **Instruction sets due.** Introduce portfolio

Thanksgiving Recess Tue. 11.24 & Thu. 11.26

Week 13

Tue. 12.01: Portfolios and professionalism.
Thu. 12.03: Portfolios, continued.

Week 14

Tue. 12.08: Rough draft workshop, portfolio.
Thu. 12.10: **Portfolios due.** Course wrap-up and evaluations.

POLICIES AND GRADING

UNIVERSITY POLICIES: Academic regulations and procedures are governed by University policy. Academic dishonesty cases will be handled in accordance with 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.

Academic Integrity:
http://www.studentaffairs.mtu.edu/dean/judicial/policies/academic_integrity.html

Affirmative Action:
http://www.admin.mtu.edu/aoa/

Disability Services:
http://www.admin.mtu.edu/urel/studenthandbook/student_services.html#disability

Equal Opportunity Statement:
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 on 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, BC to CD) 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%

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