TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC COMMUNICATION – HU3120.R01
Summer 2011 – Online section

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*This is an online course and I assume that most if not all of you are taking this course remotely. However, I am on campus for much of Track A, so if you would like to meet in person, please email me to make an appointment.

**If you would like to set up an appointment to Skype or chat with me, email me through my Tech account and not through Blackboard. I usually respond relatively quickly, but plan on a 24-hour response time Monday through and 48 hours Friday through Sunday. Please begin the subject line of any course-related email to me with “HU3120.”

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.

BASIC EXPECTATIONS

I expect you to complete all components of the three course projects: Making Information Useful (document redesign and rhetorical analysis); Instruction Set Project (usability test plan, instruction set, progress report, usability report); and Career Documents (two resumes and rhetorical analysis memo). NB: You must complete all of these assignments to receive a passing grade in the course.

I also expect you to actively participate in the Blackboard discussion forum, to do the reading and to submit all assignments and discussion posts on time, and to collaborate effectively with your classmates.

Finally, I expect you to be honest, courteous, and professional.
COURSE POLICIES

Blackboard, email, course materials, & help:
This course is taught on Blackboard. All course materials are posted there. Check Blackboard regularly since I use it to post updates and offer further explanation of assignments or readings.

If you would like to set up an appointment to chat or Skype, email me to arrange an appointment. I will check email as regularly as I can, but to be on the safe side plan on a 24-hour response time Mon – Thurs and 48 hours Fri – Sun.

I am on my email regularly, but cannot guarantee an immediate response. Do not email me through Blackboard; use my Michigan Tech email account (maseigel@mtu.edu). My inbox fills up quickly, so in order to ensure that I notice and respond to your email in a timely manner, please begin the subject line of any course-related email to me with “HU3120.” (For example, if you wanted to schedule a Skype chat, your subject would read something like “HU3120: Skype appointment.”)

If you need help with Blackboard management, contact me right away. You can also contact Blackboard support through their website (http://blackboard.mtu.edu) or email (courses@mtu.edu).

Discussion board and readings:
I expect you to read the texts assigned and to be prepared to answer discussion questions about them. Most of the readings are from the Anderson textbook. Other selections are PDFs or links and will be available in the weekly folders (Week One, Week Two, etc.) on Blackboard.

We will be using the discussion board extensively in this class, so check it daily Monday – Thursday for new prompts (expect one discussion question each day on Monday – Thursday). Each day I will post questions (sometimes I will post all the questions for the week on Monday; sometimes I will post them the day before they are due). The purpose of discussion questions is to help me assess your critical engagement in the course. You must respond to all questions. I will post a due date for each question in the description. All responses are due at 5 pm on the due date. I will not accept or give you credit for late discussion posts. Your responses are to be approximately 150 to 200 words in length. Additionally, you are expected to respond to at least two other students’ posts. Responses to other students are to be approximately 50-100 words in length. Lengthier posts will not adversely affect your grade.

I expect all discussion board posts to be respectful and mechanically correct.

I will read all of your discussion posts. Sometimes I will respond to them as a group, sometimes I will respond to individual students. I will notify you via email if your posts are not adequate in length or in content and therefore that you are not receiving full credit for them.

Replacement work:
Keep electronic copies of your work since you are responsible for replacing it should it be misplaced.

Due date/time & late work:
Be sure to note the due date and time. All due dates and times are Eastern Standard Time. If you are outside of EST, you will need to adjust accordingly. I will not accept late work.

Collaborative work:
Group members are responsible for working as a team and at a distance. Keep each other informed of current work by emailing drafts and/or progress updates at the end of each day or according to a schedule worked out by your group. Workplace teams experience, and manage, crowded schedules and conflicting commitments in electronic environments. I expect you to do the same.
I highly recommend using a collaborative writing space such as Google Docs that automatically tracks the revisions to your documents and that allows you to edit them collaboratively. To access Google Documents, go to www.google.com, click on “more” (at the top of the page); and select “Documents” from the drop down menu.

COURSE CALENDAR

This course calendar reflects only the major reading assignments and deliverables due for this course. Please note that due dates and reading assignments are subject to change—I will notify you of changes via email and Blackboard announcements. I will post additional materials and reading assignments in the weekly folders (Week One, Week Two, etc.) and additional writing assignments will be incorporated into the discussion board. Don’t forget to check the discussion boards and weekly folders daily for updates.

I’ve put the Anderson readings in the order that we will discuss them and therefore in the order that you should read them (you should usually plan on reading one chapter per day, Monday – Thursday.) In some cases, we will not explicitly discuss a reading on Blackboard; even if we don’t discuss a reading, however, I expect to see its principles reflected in the communication products that you create.

| Course Calendar |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| **Week** | **Reading** | **Assignments** |
| Week 1 | Ch. 1, 8, 14 (Anderson) Additional material on rhetoric & typography (pdfs or links) | Making information useful draft due to reviewer on Monday, May 16 by 11:59 PM |
| May 9 – 12 | | Reviewer’s comments due to author on Tuesday, May 17 at 11:59 PM |
| | Ch 9, 10, 27 (Anderson) Additional material on document design (pdfs or links) | Final draft due to Blackboard on Thursday, May 19 by 11:59 PM |
| Week 2 | | |
| May 16 – 19 | | |
| Week 3 | Ch 17, 18, 4, 16 (Anderson) Additional material on usability (pdfs or links) | Usability test plan due to Blackboard on Thursday, May 26 by 11:59 PM (group assignment) |
| May 23 – 26 | | |
| Week 4 | Ch 22, 26, 13, Additional material on usability (pdfs or links) | Conduct usability testing |
| May 31 – June 2 | | Draft of instruction set due to reviewers on Monday, May 30 by 11:59 PM (group assignment) |
| | | Reviewers’ comments due to authors on Wednesday, June 1 by 11:59 PM (can be done as individuals or as a group) |
| | | Progress report due to Blackboard on Thursday, June 2 by 11:59 PM (individual assignment) |
Week 5  
**June 6 – 9**  
Ch 24, Appendix A. 19 (Anderson)  
Additional readings on usability reports & presentations (pdfs or links)  
Draft of usability report due to reviewers on Thursday, June 9 at 11:59 PM. (group assignment)

Week 6  
**June 13 – 16**  
Readings on presentations (pdfs or links)  
Review and comment on each group’s presentation of their project.  
Reviewers’ comments (on usability report) due to authors on Monday, June 13 by 11:59 PM (can be done as individuals or as a group)  
Usability and instruction set presentation due to Blackboard on Tuesday, June 14 by 11:59 PM (group assignment)  
Usability report and instruction set due to Blackboard by Thursday, June 16 at 11:59 PM (group assignment)

Week 7  
**June 20 – 23**  
Ch 2 (Anderson)  
Additional readings on resumes (pdfs or links)  
Draft of career documents due to reviewers on Tuesday, June 21 at 11:59 PM  
Reviewer’s comments due to author on Wednesday, June 22 at 11:59 PM  
Final draft of career documents due to Blackboard on Friday, June 24 at 11:59 PM

**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 (487-3310).

You can find more information about these University policies here:

- **Academic Integrity:**
  [http://www.technologies.mtu.edu/deanofstudents/policies/academic_integrity.html](http://www.technologies.mtu.edu/deanofstudents/policies/academic_integrity.html)
• Affirmative Action:
  http://www.mtu.edu/affirmative-action

• Disability Services:
  http://www.mtu.edu/student-affairs/student-services/disability

• Equal Opportunity Statement:
  http://www.mtu.edu/admin/offices/policy/disclaimer
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 excellent** – the work is of near professional quality. The document meets all the objectives of the assignment and exceeds many. 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 minor improvements 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:

- Making Information Useful: 25%
- Instruction Set Project: 30%
- Career Documents: 20%
- Discussion posts/daily work/online participation: 25%