HU4628, SEC. 1 Useability and Instruction Writing
Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:05-4:20 p.m.

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Karla Saari Kitalong, Associate Professor
E-MAIL: kitalong@mtu.edu
OFFICE: Walker Arts & Humanities Center 329
OFFICE PHONE: 487-3254
OFFICE HRS: Tentatively Wed 4:30-5 and Thurs 12:30-2 & by appointment
BLACKBOARD: http://courses.mtu.edu

Course Description
HU4628 covers the role of usability in technical communication, focusing on instructional materials. Topics include social and cultural contexts for giving and receiving instruction; the navigation, sequencing, and design of instructional materials; and usability testing techniques frequently used by technical communication professionals.

Course Objectives: What You Can Expect to Know and Be Able to Do After Taking This Course
1. Understand the principles of usability testing with specific attention to instructions.
2. Develop skills and sensibilities needed for the effective testing of technical communication products.
3. Know how to approach and find solutions to a range of design and usability testing problems.

Texts and Other Required Materials
- Barnum, Carol M. *Usability Testing Essentials: Ready, Set... Test!* Burlington, MA: Morgan Kaufmann, 2011.
- Links and PDFs, to be distributed as handouts or via the class Blackboard site.
- Time, patience, creativity.

Required Projects and Assignments

| Individual instruction set and testing documentation. You will identify a short instructional document that you can research, design, test, and revise during an approximately 4 week section of the class. | 35% |
| Group instruction set and testing documentation. You will work with a group to produce a large and complex set of instructions for a non profit or university department. The specific assignments are still emerging. | 50% |

The Fine Print

Attentiveness, professional courtesy. I expect that you will
- refrain from holding private conversations, online with people outside of the classroom or face to face
- attend to what’s going on and reserve unrelated questions or comments until the opportune time
- be prepared to present or respond when called upon to do so
- check your e-mail and Blackboard for last-minute assignments, reminders, or changes to the schedule

Attendance, preparation. I expect you to
- read the assignment and prepare any homework, whether oral or written, before you come to class
- attend class, notify me in advance if you will be absent, and get notes or handouts from your colleagues
- be forthcoming when you have questions about the work of the class

University Links
Standard grading system: [http://www.admin.mtu.edu/catalog/university/academic/#policies](http://www.admin.mtu.edu/catalog/university/academic/#policies)
Academic Integrity Information [http://www.sas.it.mtu.edu/usenate/proposal/02/18-02.htm](http://www.sas.it.mtu.edu/usenate/proposal/02/18-02.htm)

If you have a disability and need reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please talk to the professor and call the Dean of Students Office at 7-2212. For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head, or the MTU Affirmative Action Office.

The syllabus and calendar may be changed at the professor’s discretion to accommodate the needs of the class.

Update 11 January 2012—Version 1.0
### HU 4628—Usability and Instructions Writing—Reading Schedule for January 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, Jan. 11</td>
<td>See Blackboard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, Jan. 18</td>
<td>Barnum, Intro, &amp; Chapters 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Check Blackboard before class and review any supplemental materials or assigned activities you find.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, Jan. 23</td>
<td>Barnum, Chapter 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, Jan. 25</td>
<td>Barnum, Chapter 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, Jan. 30</td>
<td>Barnum, Chapter 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, Feb. 1</td>
<td>Barnum, Chapter 6</td>
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**Disclaimer.** The bulk of the class calendar remains in flux. Over the next week to 10 days, I will be finalizing the major assignment with colleagues from Baraga Houghton Keweenaw Child Development, the Aikido school, and the Michigan Tech Department of Computer Science.

**Do not panic.** I am a reasonable person and will ensure that you have plenty of time and resources to complete assignments. Just remember to keep about 10 hours per week free so that this class doesn’t fall off your radar while the details are being ironed out. Talk to me if you have concerns.

Meanwhile, start thinking about an individual instruction set or procedure/policy manual you might work on, should the individual assignment need to come first in the semester’s sequence.

*Update 11 January 2012—Version 1.0*