**Syllabus: HU4626 (International Technical Communication)**

Instructor: Jingfang Ren  
Office: Walker 325 (mailbox: 3rd floor, Walker)  
Time: T TH 12.35-1.50 pm  
Location: Walker 120A  
Class prerequisite: HU2600  
Course/lab fee: $55.00  
Office hours: T W TH 9.30-11.00am or by appointment

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### Course Information

**Course description**
As the world flattens, both economic globalization ("the integration and rapid interaction of economies of other countries") and cultural globalization ("the transnational migration of people, information, and consumer culture") impact the workplace and offer new challenges and opportunities for technical communicators, who often work with and for people from diverse linguistic, cultural, and professional backgrounds. This course offers a space to reflect and act upon these opportunities and challenges in a way that leads to effective, efficient, and ethical communicative practices in the global workplace.

**Course goals**

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to

- Understand the social, cultural, historical, political, economic, and rhetorical situatedness of all communication practices
- Demonstrate knowledge of globalization, localization, cultural models and schema, plain English, world Englishes, international usability and ethics, contrastive rhetoric, technical translation, and other important issues and topics covered in course readings and class discussion
- Select, analyze, and use relevant research to facilitate understanding and production of "good" technical communication in particular social, cultural, and organizational contexts
- Make effective writing and design decisions for international audiences

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### Course Materials


Supplemental readings and handouts (print or PDF) provided by instructor.

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### MTU Policies

Student work products (exams, essays, projects, etc.) may be used for purposes of university, program, or course assessment. All work used for assessment purposes will not include any individual student identification.

Michigan Tech has standard policies on academic misconduct and complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the

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Class Policies and Requirements

Attendance
You are expected to attend all class meetings and to be in class and ready to contribute to the discussion at the beginning of class. You may have two (2) absences for any reason during the semester. Documented, excused absences will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and require written explanation of the circumstances with supporting documents when applicable (e.g., letter from your coach, doctor’s note, conference itinerary, invitation for job interview). For each unexcused absence after the first two (2), you will lose 50 points of your final grade. Even when absent, you are responsible for completing and turning in assignments when they are due. You may contact another student about in-class work missed when you are absent or come to see me during my office hours.

Late work
All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the dates indicated on the course calendar. Late papers and assignments are generally NOT accepted; however, personal emergencies will be taken into consideration as long as you discuss your situation with me in person, by phone, or via email at least 24 hours ahead of time. In addition, you may use up to one (1) “computer excuse”, regardless of the situation, to turn in late work.

The late work policy does apply even if you lose your work due to technological failures. You are responsible for keeping complete copies of your work for the semester. In team writing situations, make sure that all team members always have the most current version of the document that the team is working on at any stage of the project cycle.

Collaboration
Collaborative work is a required component of the course. You and your project team members are responsible for updating one another and me about assignment development and progress. In addition, you are also responsible for negotiating together all aspects of your work, including planning, drafting, revising, file managing, and record-keeping. At the end of the team project cycle, I will ask individual members to complete a Peer Collaboration Evaluation Form, which will be used to help determine your collaboration score for a particular team document.

Revision
You are encouraged to revise and resubmit your work for further evaluation or grade change. I may also revise the syllabus and course calendar throughout the semester to better serve your needs.

Conferences
See me in my office (325 Walker) when you have questions about an assignment or when you would like to try out some ideas before a document is due. You should also see me to get help with particular writing problems, to resolve differences about grades, or to suggest ways to improve the course. If you cannot make my regularly scheduled office hours (T W TH 9.30-11.30am), just email me to set up an appointment, and I’ll try my best to accommodate your schedule.
Summary of Major Projects and Assignments

**Major projects**
- Client project: writing and designing for an English-speaking, international audience (team; 500 pts)
- Annotated bibliography (individual; 250 pts)

**Other assignments**
In addition to the major projects listed above, you will also complete some smaller assignments throughout the semester, including the following:
- A one-page, single-spaced response paper on a chapter from Friedman book (individual; 50 pts)
- Leadership of class discussion on TWO assigned articles (individual; 100 pts total/50 pts each)
- Participation and contribution (holistic and cumulative; 100 pts)

Extra credit opportunities (you can only choose ONE):
- Attend an event (e.g., workshop, conference presentation, STC speaker series etc.) that you think would help you develop a better understanding of the theory or practice of international technical communication. Write a one-page memo detailing your experience. You are encouraged to share info about such events with other members of our HU4626 community (60 pts)
- Write an additional one-page single-spaced response paper on one of the assigned articles (50 pts)

**Grading**
Generally speaking, audience, purpose, communication context, design, clarity, and professional *ethos* are some of the major factors that I take into consideration when grading your documents. For each assignment, I’ll use a specific set of criteria that highlight the objectives or goals of that particular assignment, which can be found in the assignment description/prompt.

**Grade conversion**
The assignments are “worth” the above indicated amounts. In addition, you must complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in this course. Late assignments (except the one for which you used your “computer excuse”) lose 50 pts for each day (anytime past 5.00pm) of the due day. Use the table below to convert points to letter grades.

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