Syllabus
COM 310: Technical Communication – Fall 2004
M, W, F 10:00 – 10:50 AM
Korman 103B

Instructor: Holly Burnside
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Office phone: 215-895-2890
Office hours: Wednesday 4:30 – 5:30 PM at Ross Commons 2nd Floor
Thursday 4:30 – 5:30 PM at my office
Other times by appointment - My schedule is pretty flexible
Office location: PSA Building (Building 47), 33rd St. and Powelton Ave., Room 306

Text:

Recommended supplementary reading:

I also recommend a copy of a recent style guide used by your field: MLA, APA, AP, CBE, etc. and a copy of Strunk and White’s Elements of Style.

Prerequisites:
HUM 103 or 108 required; co-op experience preferred.

Course Description:
This course will introduce you to the technical writing style. Assignments will represent a variety of work-related writing experiences, and I will evaluate assignments based on principles of technical communication. By the end of the term, you should be more proficient communicators, with greater awareness and knowledge of the rhetorical situations and styles that you will encounter in your careers.

The course is writing intensive. We will have some in-class writing exercises, and you should plan to schedule enough time for the out-of-class assignments.

Assignments:
All papers (including rough drafts) must be typed, using 1.5 or double spacing and 12 point font, unless otherwise instructed. Letters and memos should be single-spaced. Please staple or paperclip all submissions.

Web Evaluation: Write a short memo (no more than one page) in which you present your evaluations of a web site. Focus on the ease of navigation, design and appearance,
quality of writing, and how the text and graphics are inter-related. Include both strengths and weaknesses of the site and offer suggestions for improvement.

**Crisis Assignment:** For this assignment, you will write two separate documents. I will not expect more than a page for each document. For the first, you will imagine that your company or organization has recently experienced or is about to experience a problem. You must write a memo to someone within your company about the problem. The second document will be a letter to the press which describes the problem and solution.

**Instructions:** You will work in groups of 3-5 for this assignment. Your group will choose a task and write instructions for the task. I will suggest some topics in class. Instructions should include appropriate illustrations and graphics. Because layout and design issues affect the number of pages, it is difficult to project how long the final instructions will be. I expect length to be anywhere from 3-10 pages. The whole group will share a grade for this assignment.

**Proposal:** Your final project will be a proposal. In it, you will request to perform/research/undertake a project. You will address the proposal to the individual or group who has the authority to make a decision about your request. Your proposal should set out the problem and why you need to tackle it, what you plan to do, how you plan to do it, and how you will evaluate the success of the project. In addition, you should establish your qualifications, discuss any necessary budgets, and provide a timetable for successful completion (Gantt chart).

Your proposal should include the following elements:
- Letter of transmittal
- Title page
- Table of Contents
- Executive Summary
- The body of the proposal
- Figures and tables
- And, if necessary, a glossary, appendices, and references.

The length of the report should be around 6-10 pages.

**Rough Draft Conference:** In the 8th week of the term, class will not meet. Instead, we will schedule one-on-one conferences to discuss your proposal drafts. I will expect you to e-mail me a draft of your proposal no later than 2 pm on the day before your conference. The conferences are worth 5 percent of your course grade. If you miss the conference or do not have a draft, you may lose these points.

**Oral Presentation:** You will give a presentation of your proposal in class. The presentation should be about 5-10 minutes long. You will present to the class, but imagine that you are presenting to whom the proposal is addressed. You should take a minute at the beginning to tell us who your audience is.
Notes:
1. Keep to the length, as closely as possible.

2. Use visual aids. I would suggest you use PowerPoint, but you may also use transparencies, or a hand-out. Let me know ahead of time what type of visual aid you plan to use, as we may need to make special arrangements.

3. You are responsible for giving the presentation on the date you sign up for.

Policies
Attendance/Participation:
Attendance and participation account for 15 percent of your grade. Therefore, they can make the difference in borderline cases.

Due Dates:
Assignments are due by class time on the dates indicated on the syllabus. If you would like to email me the assignments rather than hand me a copy, do so before coming to class.

Extensions:
Extensions may be granted only if you contact me at least 24 hours before the original deadline. Along with the request for an extension, you must suggest a new, realistic deadline for the assignment. Failure to meet the second deadline will significantly affect your grade for the assignment.

Workshops:
We will have peer review workshops in class for the web evaluation, crisis, and instructions assignments. I hope that these workshops will allow you to get to know one another, get used to working together, and get used to constructive criticism, as well as help out with the writing assignments.

Rewrites:
You may rewrite the crisis assignment and/or the instructions after receiving a grade. The rewrites are due one week after the assignments are returned to you or as otherwise announced in class. Please hand in the original assignment with my comments with the rewrite. I will count the rewrite grade as the grade for the assignment.

Plagiarism:
Plagiarism, also known as academic cheating or theft, includes submitting someone else’s work as your own or not appropriately acknowledging (through correct reference citation) material you have borrowed or taken from other writers. Plagiarism also includes using without attribution material written or created by others that you have taken from the World Wide Web. Review guidelines in the Drexel Student Handbook or speak to your instructor. See also your textbook – Chapter 2 and pages referenced in the index.
Plagiarism is a serious ethical offense that can result in a failing grade for the paper and/or the course and a letter to the University Judicial Board.

**Writing Center:**
The Writing Center, located at 32 MacAlister (x6633), offers a variety of helpful writing services. I encourage you to take advantage of the Writing Center. Check out the Web site at [http://www.drexel.edu/academics/coas/writingcenter/index.html](http://www.drexel.edu/academics/coas/writingcenter/index.html).

**Evaluation:**
I will calculate your course grades according to the following percentages:

- Web Evaluation 15
- Crisis Communication 15
- Instructions 15
- Proposal 25
- Rough Draft conference 5
- Oral Presentation 10
- Attendance/Participation/ In-class assignments 15

100
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Corresponding Chapters</th>
<th>Important Dates</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sept 27, 29, Oct 1</td>
<td>Introductions, Audience, memos</td>
<td>1, 5, and p. 378-381</td>
<td></td>
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| 2    | Oct 4, 6, 8   | Ethics, sentences, coherence, grammar review| 2, 11                  | Wednesday: draft of web evaluation memo due for peer review  
|      |              |                                             |                        | Friday: web evaluation memo due to turn in            |
| 3    | Oct 11, 13, 15 | Collaboration, Drafting and Revising       | 4, 3, 10               | Monday: no class  
|      |              |                                             |                        | Friday: draft of crisis assignment due for peer review |
| 4    | Oct 18, 20, 22 | Design, Graphics Instructions              | 13, 14, 20             | Monday: crisis assignment due to turn in              |
| 5    | Oct 25, 27, 29| Proposals, Organizing Information, Front and Back Matter | 17, 8, 12             |                                                      |
| 6    | Nov 1, 3, 5   | Persuasion                                 | 6                      | Friday: draft of instructions due for peer review    |
| 7    | Nov 8, 10, 12 | Oral Presentations                        | 22                     | Wednesday: instructions due to turn in               |
| 8    | Nov 15, 17, 19| Proposal conferences                       |                        | M, W, F: no class                                   |
| 9    | Nov 22, 24, 26| Definitions and Descriptions              | 9                      | W, F: no class                                       |
| 10   | Nov 29, Dec 1, 3 | Presentations                           |                        |                                                      |
| 11   | Dec 6, 8, 10  | Presentations                              |                        | Wednesday: Proposal due to turn in                   |