

# COMMI050 technical communication

**Jenna Jacobson**  
Fall 2012  
Tuesday  
8:10-11:00 a.m.  
Pavilion UPI500



Faculty of Social Science and Humanities

## **C**ourse Description

This course introduces students to the fundamental principles of technical communication. Through a variety of assignments reflecting real workplace practices, students develop their ability to document and reference sources, perform audience analysis, evaluate sources and data, write persuasively but ethically, write with proper mechanics, and create technical reports. This course prepares students for writing at both the university and professional level, and is appropriate to students wanting to improve their communication skills.

## Learning Outcomes

On the successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the techniques, tools, elements, and processes that apply to technical communication
- Plan, design, and edit memos, proposals, and analytical reports
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of referencing and citing a variety of sources appropriately
- Create and present technical documents that are clear, effective, and well written
- Apply the principles of technical communication to future career pursuits

## COURSE MATERIAL

### Required Textbook

Irish, R. & Weiss, P.E. (2009). *Engineering communication*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

### Highly Recommended

Northey, M. & Jewinski, J. (2009). *Making sense: A student's guide to research and writing (Engineering and the technical sciences)*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

## Meet your instructor: **Jenna Jacobson**



Office Hours: Tuesday, 4:30-5:30 p.m. or by appointment  
Office Location: UA 2045—Science Building  
Email: use Blackboard - [jenna.jacobson@uoit.ca](mailto:jenna.jacobson@uoit.ca)  
Twitter: @jacobsonjenna  
Course Hashtag: #COMMI050

## Meet your amazing Teaching Assistants (TA)

Kiri Lutchman  
Melissa Mastrangelo  
Amanda Wendelgass  
Office hours are by appointment  
Contact TA through Blackboard

# Course Expectations

## Collaboration

In a fast-paced work environment, you will inevitably work in teams and rely on other people in your future careers. At the very least, others will assess your work, including both professors and employers. This class will incorporate peer review and collaborative learning. The peer review process allows you to interact with one another, and review alternative ways of approaching and writing about a topic. This will take place through reviewing your colleagues in-lecture activities, collaborative evaluation of your YouTube oral presentations, and working in teams to produce the Analytical Report. We can all learn from each other. Where individual work is assigned, do not pursue unauthorized

## Readings

Students are expected to have read all of the assigned readings for each week before coming to class. Information covered in the readings may not be taught during the lecture; students are responsible for acquiring this information because it will be included in assessments.

## Technology

Please bring your laptop, network cable, and laptop charger to every class. Your laptop is only to be used for note-taking, research, activities, and completing the course assignments and assessments. It is strongly recommended that you have at least one flash drive to back up your assignments. For online tutorials, it is strongly recommended that you use a headset.

## Social Media

In an attempt to foster digital collaborative learning, we will be using Twitter in this course. Please use the hashtag #COMM1050 to share information that you think your classmates might find interesting or to comment on the material we discuss in lectures or in the readings. This will allow us to keep a line of communication open so you can participate at any time. Use Twitter as an opportunity to discuss key points and concisely convey what you are thinking in 140 characters or less! Let's have fun with this.

## Conduct

The (online) classroom is an environment where diverse opinions can be openly shared. All members of this class should treat one another with respect. This includes during lecture hours and online. If you have any concerns about the course then please feel free to discuss with the teaching team. Please do not use your mobile phone to talk, text, or otherwise message during class. We meet for only 3 hours a week, so please treat this time respectfully and refrain from using your mobile phone.

## Attendance

Formal attendance will not be taken in lectures, but there will be in-lecture activities that can only be accessed during lectures. There will be NO MAKEUPS for missed in-lecture activities. Please respect our time together by arriving on time for class. Students are responsible for obtaining course materials on days they are absent. Lecture notes are always posted on Blackboard, but speak to your classmates to find out what information was missed.

## Tips for success

Check out the **Academic Success Centre**, which offers one-on-one support, workshops, courses, and peer-review sessions for writing and English as a second language.

<http://academicsuccess.uoit.ca/>

Also, get online support at **nool**

<http://nool.apa.uoit.ca/>

## Quick facts:

- Our first class meets Tuesday September 11, 2012
- Our last class meets Tuesday December 4, 2012
- Tutorials begin Wednesday, September 12, 2012
- Tutorials end Tuesday, November 27, 2012

# Grading Scheme

Assignment	Grade Percent
In-Lecture Activities	20%
Oral Presentation	5%
Tutorials	10%
Proposal Outline	10%
Formal Analytical Report	25%
Test #1	15%
Test #2	15%

*Official UOIT Grading Scheme*  
A+ 90-100; A 85-89; A- 80-84;  
B+ 77-79; B 73-76; B- 70-72;  
C+ 67-69; C 60-66;  
D 50-59; F 0-49

## In-Lecture Activities (5)

There are two parts to this assignment. First, you will be given an assignment to complete in class. Once completed, you will post your assignment to a specific discussion board. Second, you will comment and peer-review 3 other students' posts. *Please show respect to your fellow students and TAs – try to work with each other to build knowledge and provide positive feedback rather than making comments to show people up.* There are **NO** substitute assignments.

## Oral Presentation

The Oral Presentation will be a 5-minute presentation based on the Proposal Outline. This presentation will be filmed and posted on Blackboard (e.g. YouTube link). It will be considered an oral proposal/pitch to senior members at the company. The second component to this assignment will be an In-Lecture Activity. Students will peer-review other students' presentations and comment in-class.

Assignment outlines will be posted on Blackboard and discussed in class.

## Tutorials

Tutorials are an essential component to this course. Students are required to attend all tutorials, as grades will be based on formal attendance. Many tutorial topics will provide you with important information and practice opportunities that will help with the successful completion of the major assignment.

## Tests (2)

There are two assessments for this course that will comprise of multiple choice, true or false, and short essay questions. Tests will be completed through Blackboard during the time allotted in class. To ensure academic integrity, all assessments will be completed using Respondus Lockdown Browser.

## Major Assignment

The major assignment consists of two parts: 1) Proposal Outline and 2) Analytical Report.

Students may choose to complete the assignments in pairs. Partners must be from the same lecture section and have the same Teaching Assistant.

The Proposal Outline is a crucial component to the assignment, as it will outline what you and your partner choose to develop and research for the Analytical Report.

Assignment outlines will be posted on Blackboard and discussed in class.

## Assignment Policy

Assignments for this course will be submitted electronically via the "Assignments" tool on Blackboard. If you are experiencing problems with your laptop or if it is being repaired, please contact the Mobile Computing Centre ext. 2727.

### Non-negotiated Late Assignment:

This is an assignment that has been handed in late, i.e. after the first ten minutes past the due time, without a prior agreement between the student and the instructor to extend the time for submission of the assignment. Such assignments will be considered late and the final grade for the assignment will be reduced by 5% per day. (Assignments are not accepted after 10 days.)

### Negotiated Late Assignment:

This is an assignment that has been handed in late with the permission of the instructor due to extenuating circumstances. The student must provide documentation to validate the extenuating circumstance that might include hospitalization, death of a family member or significant other. The instructor will have the discretion to determine any extension in such situations. The instructor and student, through discussion, have mutually agreed on the time/extension and penalty (if applicable) that the student will receive.

*\*NOTE: Incomplete or corrupted files will not be counted as an "on time" submission. It is your responsibility to submit complete, valid documents for marking. Incomplete or corrupted files will be marked as a zero. In addition, excuses such as "the printer was not working" or "my computer died" or other related technology-based excuses are not valid. Plan ahead, save documents to a USB (flash) drive, and always submit well before the assignment is due.*

## Diversity of Learning Styles

Your teaching team recognizes that all students learn in diverse ways, such as visual, auditory, tactile, etc. A multimodal learning environment is utilized in lectures and tutorials, which combine the online and offline interaction of lectures, discussions, social media, etc.

**Your success is our priority,** so please do not hesitate to let your instructor or TA know if there is anything further we can do to foster a more beneficial learning environment for you.

### Individual Needs and Accessibility

To ensure that disability-related concerns are properly addressed during this course, students with documented disabilities and who may require assistance to participate in this class are encouraged to speak with the instructor as soon as possible. Students who require alternative testing and examination arrangements or other academic accommodations must contact the Centre for Students with Disabilities (B297) as early as possible to ensure needs are met.

For any disability-related support, you may contact the Student Experience Centre (SEC) Disability Services located on the 2nd floor, 61 Charles Street. Accommodation support is available for students with mental health, physical, mobility, sensory, medical, cognitive, or learning challenges.

Office hours are 8:30am-4:30pm, Mon-Fri. For more information on services provided, you can visit the website at

[http://uoit.ca/sites/csd/downtown\\_students/index.php](http://uoit.ca/sites/csd/downtown_students/index.php)

Students may contact the SEC Disability Services by calling 905-721-8668 x 5624, or email [downtowndisability@uoit.ca](mailto:downtowndisability@uoit.ca)

## Academic Integrity

*Plagiarism* is an extremely serious academic offence and carries penalties varying from failure in an assignment to suspension from the University. Definitions, penalties, and procedures for dealing with plagiarism are set out in the UOIT's "Academic Conduct Policy" which is printed in section 5.15 of the UOIT Calendar. It outlines what Academic Misconduct and Professional Unsuitability means and the penalties for violating this policy.

It is essential that you be able to document your creative process in producing assignments because assignments sometimes get lost, and because questions of authorship sometimes arise. You must keep your research notes and rough drafts for papers and assignments, even after the finished work has been graded and returned. When composing on a computer, preserve copies of work in progress at regular intervals so that you have a track record of how the assignment evolved. Print hard copies of the work at different stages, or use the 'save as' function on the computer to record successive drafts. The sequence of drafts should be carefully noted. An inability to provide these materials, if requested, will constitute grounds for failure on the assignment and will result in a report kept on file in the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities.

### Turnitin.com

This class will use Turnitin.com for the Analytical Report.

**Note:** If you do **not** want your assignment submitted to Turnitin.com, you must submit the opt-out form and completed assignment in person and not submit electronically on WebCT. *Your assignment must then be submitted with all research notes and rough drafts.* Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will not be tolerated in this course. Please see the university's policy on academic integrity and the note on turnitin.com that follows and download the cover sheet from the Course WebCT page. The UOIT plagiarism policy is available on:

<http://www.uoit.ca/EN/main/11258/12122/policies.html>.

**UOIT Note:** *The University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) is committed to the fundamental values of preserving academic integrity as defined in UOIT policies and contained in the UOIT Calendar. UOIT and faculty members reserve the right to use electronic means to detect and help prevent plagiarism. Students agree that by taking this course all assignments are subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com. Assignments submitted to Turnitin.com will be included as source documents in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents for five academic years. The faculty member may require students to submit their assignments electronically to Turnitin.com or the faculty member may submit questionable text on behalf of a student. The terms that apply to UOIT's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com website.*

This outline documents the instructor's intentions for this course. It may become clear that some modifications may be necessary. Any modifications that may influence student success or the marking scheme will be made only after discussions have taken place with students.

# Week by week outline

Week	Date	Lecture Topics	Assignment/Test Dates	Tutorial Assignments
1	09/11	<b>Welcome to COMMI050</b> Introduction (pp. 1-14, 284-291)		<i>Trial for online tutorials</i>
2	09/18	<b>Writing with Purpose</b> Principles #1-3 (pp. 17-54) Purpose, Genre, Audience Email Proposals	<b>In-Lecture Activity #1</b>	Major Assignment Overview Pick Topic & Partner
3	09/25	<b>Effective Research</b> <i>Guest Speaker: Librarian Nathalie Zhou</i>		Audience Analysis
4	10/02	<b>Framing Knowledge</b> Principle #7 (pp. 94-100) Principle #17 (pp. 183-184) Power Position Capitals	<b>In-Lecture Activity #2</b>	Documentation (APA & IEEE) <i>Proposal Questions</i>
5	10/09	<b>Developing a Credible Argument</b> Principle #4 (pp. 55-68, 332-337) Fallacies Peer Review	<b>Proposal Outline</b> (Due by 11:00 p.m. October 13)	<i>No tutorial</i>
6	10/16	<b>Organizing Information &amp; Introductions</b> Principles #5 & 6 (pp. 68-82) Rhetorical Tools, Effective Intro		Fundamentals of Grammar (p. 294-331)
7	10/23	In-Class Assessment <b>Moving from Known to New Information</b> Principle #12 (pp. 142-148)	<b>Test #1</b> (Tuesday, October 23)	Oral Presentations
8	10/30	<b>Oral Presentations</b> (pp. 242-283) Resume writing	<b>In-Lecture Activity #3</b>	Resumes and Cover Letters
9	11/06	<b>Writing for Readability</b> Principles #14-16 (pp. 168-182) Elevating Verbs, Positioning Verbs, Real Subject	<b>Oral Presentation</b> (Due Monday, November 5) <b>In-Lecture Activity #4</b>	Organizing, Formatting, Researching & Documenting
10	11/13	<b>Document Design</b> Principles #8-11 (pp. 101-141) Visible Structure, Directing the Reader, Transitions	<b>In-Lecture Activity #5</b>	Editing and Proofreading
11	11/20	<b>Visual Communication</b> (pp. 207-224) Peer Review	<b>Formal Analytical Report</b> (Due by 11:00 p.m. November 24)	In-Text Citations <i>Analytical Report - Questions</i>
12	11/27	<b>Writing your Future: Careers</b> <i>Guest Speakers: Career Centre Anne Coulby &amp; Jeremy Greenberg</i> Test #2 Review		Portfolio Building
13	12/04	In-Class Assessment	<b>Test #2</b> (Tuesday, December 4)	<i>No tutorial</i>

## Communication

Please post all questions to Blackboard so everyone can benefit from the collective knowledge. Every effort will be made to answer questions by the following business day.

Matters for the sole attention of the instructor or TA should be done through Blackboard. Emails to a member of the teaching team should be professionally written, including proper use of English, tone, and composition. Please include the course code and tutorial number in the subject line and sign your full name with student number.

Most emails will be answered within 48 hours. I suggest that you do the following before contacting the instructor:

ask your friends or classmates, or post queries through “general discussion boards” on Blackboard

*Note: Emails sent after 5 p.m. regarding an assignment due the following day will not be answered. Plan accordingly.*

**If you have a question, chances are you are not alone and other people in the course may have the same question!**

## Important Dates

#	In-Lecture Activity	Due Date	Peer-Review/Comments
1	Email Proposal	Tuesday, September 18	Wednesday, September 19
2	Translation Piece	Tuesday, October 2	Wednesday, October 3
3	Resume	Tuesday, October 30	Wednesday, October 31
4	Oral Presentation Feedback	Monday, November 5	Wednesday, November 7
5	Writing Reflection	Tuesday, November 13	Wednesday, November 14

### In-Lecture Activity

The In-Lecture Activities will be peer-reviewed, and your grade will be based on active participation and completeness of the activity.

### Oral Presentation

The YouTube link to your Oral Presentation must be submitted to the appropriate In-Lecture Activity Discussion Board.

Monday, November 5

### Assessments

Assessments will consist of multiple choice, true or false, and short answer questions.

Test #1 – Tuesday, October 23

Test #2 – Tuesday, December 4

### Major Assignments

The major assignments will be graded using a rubric, which is accessible via Blackboard.

Proposal Outline – Saturday, October 13 @ 11:00 p.m.

Formal Analytical Report – Saturday, November 24 @ 11:00 p.m.