

LCC 3401: Technical Communication Practices
Audience-Focused Approaches to Management Communication
Spring 2008: Section L

Instructor: L. Andrew Cooper
Office Location: Skiles 301
Office Hours: M/W 3pm-4:30 and by appointment
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Course Description

Prerequisites: ENGL 1101 and 1102

LCC 3401 carries two semester hours of credit and no humanities credit

Your ability to communicate will help determine your success in your profession, particularly if you are responsible for managing others' work. This course introduces techniques and conventions for workplace communication, emphasizing types of communication that are crucial to successful management. Successful management communication adapts to the exigencies of context: it meets the needs of a specific audience in a specific situation. To master the contextual practices of technical communication, you will:

- Study written, oral, visual, electronic, and nonverbal modes of communication
- Use design principles to combine modes of communication effectively
- Analyze diverse audiences and methods for addressing them
- Develop persuasive strategies for speech, writing, and visual design
- Practice informal and formal styles that are concise, concrete, and conventional
- Explore ethical and linguistic problems in marketing and management
- Research and develop documents that are accessible and comprehensible
- Focus on communication and management as you conceive, design, create, market, and sell a product that involves extensive writing and visual design

Required Texts

1. Burnett, Rebecca. *Technical Communication*. 6th ed. [Available at the GT Barnes and Noble and at Engineer's]
2. Ferrell, O.C. and Michael D. Hartline. *Marketing Strategy*. 4th ed. [SELECTED CHAPTERS ONLY, available for individual purchase via www.ichapters.com; enter the ISBN 0324362722]
3. Selected articles available online or via the professor

NOTE: You may also need to consult an English dictionary and a grammar/usage guide such as *The St. Martin's Handbook*

Course Policies

Grading

Each assignment has a point value. Assignments add up to a total of 1000 points. Convert point totals into percentages, and the letter grade equivalents are:

A = 90-100; **B** = 80-89; **C** = 70-79; **D** = 60-69; **F** = 0-59

Failure to complete an assignment will result in 0 points.

Attendance

If you must miss class, email me ahead of time. You have two “freebie” days, classes you may miss without any grade penalties. You have two additional “professional” days that you may use for penalty-free absences if you have documentation to prove that you have a job interview, conference presentation, or other professional obligation that conflicts with a class time. For other absences, you must have official documentation of an illness, injury, or legal obligation that keeps you from class. I will deduct 25 points from your grade for each non-freebie, undocumented absence. Three latenesses constitute an absence. After six absences, you may fail the course. *Even “excused,” documented absences could affect your participation grade if they occur too often.*

Punctual Work

Unless I approve a deadline extension, which is unlikely, I will not accept major assignments after the deadline. You are responsible for all information covered during every class meeting.

Class Conduct/Ethics

You are responsible for knowing and abiding by GT’s policy for academic integrity. Consult the Honor Code online at <http://www.honor.gatech.edu> or in the General Catalog. In professional terms, the Honor Code is our code of conduct or ethics. Unethical work will receive zero credit and may result in failure of the entire course. I will also report any serious breach of ethics to the dean of students. In addition to following the honor code, you must behave professionally in class and treat classmates with respect. Disruptive or disrespectful behavior will hurt your participation grade.

Disability Notice

Students with disabilities should contact Access Disabled Assistance Program for Tech Students (ADAPTS) within the first two weeks of the semester to develop reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor call (404) 894-2564 (voice) / (404) 894-1664 (voice/TDD) or visit 220 Student Services Building. For more information visit <http://www.adapts.gatech.edu>.

The Fine Print

I reserve the right to alter the policies and assignments on this syllabus. I will exercise this right rarely, but I will often provide more detailed information about assignments during class. This syllabus is your guide. Keep it. Know it. Love it.

Assignments

The ultimate goal of this course is to produce a “Survival Guide” for professional life after college that course participants will market and sell across the Georgia Tech campus. The table below describes the major assignments involved in producing the Survival Guide. Though the “phases” follow a logical sequence, some phases will occur simultaneously. For example, the “promotion” phase is likely to begin during “market research” and continue throughout “production” and “sales.”

Each student does all individual and, in one of five workgroups, all collaborative assignments, but each student has only one “special assignment.” Students will sign up for their special assignments at the beginning of the semester. Assignments described below add up to 850 points per student out of the course total of 1000. Since students submit special assignments individually, half of the 850 points are for individual work, and half are for collaborative work. The remaining 150 points are for participation and smaller assignments to be determined. Note that participation includes not only punctual attendance but also active participation in all class discussions and activities. Participation is *not* an “easy A.”

Phase	Individual Assignments	Collaborative Assignments	Special Assignments
Group Organization	<i>Self-Introduction</i> (25 points): Give a brief presentation about the abilities and experiences you bring to a workgroup. <i>Audience Analysis</i> (25 points): Describe how analysis of your audience informed your strategy for your self-introduction.	<i>Group Agreement</i> (50 points): Develop definitions of members’ roles, procedures for decision-making, and a code of conduct.	<i>Personnel Management</i> (100 points): Determine group memberships and track individuals’ performances.
Market Research	<i>Data Report</i> (100 points): Report on your contribution to the collection of data about the Survival Guide’s target audience.	<i>Chapter Proposal</i> (50 points): After the class reviews data, propose a chapter of the Survival Guide that meets the market’s needs.	<i>Research Management</i> (100 points): Create strategies for collecting information and oversee collection activities.
Production	<i>Assessments</i> (50 points, 25 each): Write a memo that assesses your group’s work and an email that assesses the work of another group.	<i>Guide Chapter</i> (200 points): Produce a chapter of the Survival Guide that meets production managers’ standards.	<i>Production Management</i> (100 points): Ensure the Survival Guide’s coherence and evaluate groups’ performances.
Promotion	<i>Promotional Artifact</i> (100 points): Produce a promotional artifact for use during a promotional period (from pre-production to post).	<i>Group Presentation</i> (100 points): With other groups, give a public presentation about the Survival Guide.	<i>Marketing Management</i> (100 points): Develop and implement strategies for marketing the Survival Guide to the target audience.
Sales	<i>Product Delivery</i> (25 points): Help to deliver Survival Guides and to collect and manage proceeds.	<i>Distribution Strategy</i> (25 points): Develop a strategy for distributing guides to a sector of the target audience.	<i>Financing Management</i> (100 points): Ensure that the class has resources to produce the Survival Guide and that all proceeds from sale of the guide reach a designated charity.

Management Positions for Special Assignments

You must sign up for a management position in order to complete the Special Assignment. To succeed in your management position, you must do the following:

- Attend meetings outside of class to plan tasks related to your assignment
- Communicate with the professor and other students about plans
- Coordinate and participate in the execution of tasks
- Keep records, including documentation and commentary about activities
- Submit a portfolio after all tasks are complete to demonstrate accomplishments

The job descriptions below provide an overview of managers' primary responsibilities. Terms in italics indicate assignments described under "Assignments" above.

Personnel Managers: Early in the course, they gather information about classmates from *self-introductions*. They develop systems of priorities that they summarize in their portfolios. During a closed meeting with the professor, they use their systems as they take turns choosing members of their groups. After determining memberships, they help to enforce the *group agreement*, reporting any violations to production managers.

Research Managers: Early in the course, they meet with the professor and each other to strategize research about the Survival Guide's target audience. Information about the target audience supports the *proposals*, and summaries of strategies go into the portfolios. During the market research and production phases, research managers also suggest ways that all students in the class can contribute to data collection in order to complete *data reports*. Every student in the class must do research; the research managers must ensure that research is efficient and effective.

Production Managers: Early in the course, they meet with the professor and each other to determine standards that will make different groups' *guide chapters* consistent enough for the Survival Guide to be a coherent whole. Then, the professor assigns each production manager to a group other than her or his own. During production, production managers check their assigned groups' work to ensure it meets standards. They also collect information from personnel managers, *work assessments*, and other sources about individuals' contributions within the assigned group. They use this information to write evaluations of the group that the professor will consider as he assigns grades. They include these evaluations in their portfolios.

Marketing Managers: Early in the course, they meet with the professor and each other to discuss and coordinate promotional efforts that could occur before, during, and after production of the Survival Guide. They summarize their strategies in their portfolios. To implement marketing strategies, they coordinate efforts to distribute *promotional artifacts* throughout the term and help to plan the *group presentation*.

Financing Managers: Early in the course, they meet with the professor and each other to discuss plans for selecting and securing means for financing production. They summarize their plans in their portfolios. Throughout the term, they coordinate the implementation of their plans. At the end of the term, they coordinate the collection and delivery of proceeds from sales while overseeing the implementation of *distribution strategies* and *product delivery*.

Schedule of Meetings, Readings, and Deadlines

	Topics and Readings	Deadlines
Week 1 1/7 & 1/9	M: Course Intro: Meet the Audience W: Presentations 1: Speaking Basics, Burnett ch. 4 and 17	W: Finance meeting scheduled Special assignments finalized
Week 2 1/14 & 1/16	M: What is Tech Comm?, Burnett ch. 1 W: The Cultures of GT, Burnett ch. 2	M: Self-Introductions W: Self-Introductions Research meeting scheduled
Week 3 1/21 & 1/23	M: HOLIDAY—NO CLASS W: Documents 1: Planning and Drafting, Burnett ch. 7	W: Personnel meeting scheduled Marketing meeting scheduled
Week 4 1/28 & 1/30	M: Documents 2: Revising and Editing, Burnett ch. 8 W: Research Basics, Burnett ch. 6	M: Audience Analysis due Production meeting scheduled
Week 5 2/4 & 2/6	M: Documents 3: Organization and Design, Burnett ch. 10 and 11 W: Collaboration and Definitions, Burnett ch. 5 and 14	M: Workgroups finalized
Week 6 2/11 & 2/13	M: Proposals, Burnett ch. 19 W: Documents 4: Revising Group Agreements	W: Group Agreement due Chapter Topic Voting
Week 7 2/18 & 2/20	M: Reports, Burnett ch. 20 W: Documents 5: Revising Data Reports	W: Data Report due
Week 8 2/25 & 2/27	M: Marketing 1: Marketing and Information, Ferrell and Hartline ch. 1 and 4 W: Visuals, Burnett ch. 12	W: Chapter Proposals due
Week 9 3/3 & 3/5	M: Electronic Communication, Burnett ch. 13 W: Manuals, Burnett ch. 21	
Week 10 3/10 & 3/12	M: Usability, Burnett ch. 9 W: Marketing 2: The Audience Revisited, Ferrell and Hartline ch. 6 and 10	
Week 11 3/17 & 3/19	SPRING BREAK	
Week 12 3/24 & 3/26	M: Marketing 3: Strategy in Action, Hajim, “How Hewlett”; Lyons, “Attack”; Welch, “Why Toyota” W: Correspondence, Burnett ch. 18	M: Promotional Artifact due (if not submitted earlier)
Week 13 3/31 & 4/2	M: WORKSHOP W: WORKSHOP	M: Guide Chapter Drafts due
Week 14 4/7 & 4/9	M: Distribution W: Marketing 4: Marketing Ethics, Srnka, “Culture’s Role”; Maher, “Thin Line Between”	M: SURVIVAL GUIDE DUE W: Distribution Strategy due
Week 15 4/14 & 4/16	M: Presentations 2: Review Burnett ch. 17 W: Presentations 3: Rehearsal	W: Work Assessments due
Week 16 4/21 & 4/23	M: The Sales Pitch [MAY BE RESCHEDULED] W: Conclusions	M: Group Presentation W: Special Assignment portfolios due; Product Delivery due

PLEASE READ, SIGN, AND RETURN THESE STATEMENTS TO DR. COOPER.

I affirm that I have read the entire syllabus and policy sheet for LCC 3401 and understand the information and the responsibilities specified.

 print name

 signature

 date

DIRECTIONS: Read carefully and check all that apply.

I give my instructor, L. Andrew Cooper, permission to use copies of the work I do for this course, LCC 3401:

- as examples in this and other courses
 as examples in presentations and in print and electronic publications

Please indicate how you want to be acknowledged:

- Please use my name both in the acknowledgements and with my actual document.
 Please use my name in the acknowledgements section but use an appropriate pseudonym with my actual document.
 Please use a pseudonym both in the acknowledgements and with my actual document.
 Please use my work, but do not acknowledge me in any way.

-
- I do not want my work used as examples in any situations.
-

 print name

 signature

 print permanent address

 print campus address

 date