Technical Communication Practices (LCC 3401)
Communication for Pre-Health Students
Fall 2009: Section M, M/W 4:05-4:55

Instructor: L. Andrew Cooper
Office: Skiles 341
Office Hours: M/W 3:05-3:55 and by appointment
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Course Description

This course introduces the rhetorical principles and practices of technical communication, the communication that drives professional productivity. To meet the needs of pre-health students, it focuses on projects that involve communication related to entering and succeeding within the health professions. These projects will help a specific client to advise *other* pre-health students about how to succeed in their careers. Three theoretical assumptions inform this approach:

1. Working on multimodal, multimedia projects helps students to recognize the principles that inform communication in *all* modes and media while providing experience with and understanding of the properties and constraints inherent to *specific* modes and media.
2. Participating in such projects gives students experience with and understanding of both the collaborative and the individual processes involved in professional communication.
3. Creating products intended for use by audiences outside the classroom, audiences who might rely on the artifacts in their own careers, helps students to understand the importance and vitality of effective technical communication.

As a result of working on these projects, students will develop a range of competencies and strategies for communication that will inform their own success in the health professions.

Textbooks

This course requires two textbooks, available at the Georgia Tech Barnes and Noble and The Engineer's Bookstore:

1. Heifferon, Barbara A. *Writing in the Health Professions*. New York: Pearson Education, 2005.
2. O'Hair, Dan, et al. *A Pocket Guide to Public Speaking*. 2nd Edition. New York: Bedford / St. Martin's, 2007.

Objectives and Outcomes

All LCC 3401 courses at Georgia Tech have objectives (cognitive processes instructors want students to demonstrate) and outcomes (work students do to demonstrate success in those objectives) specified by Georgia Tech's Writing and Communication Program (Communication@Tech). Table 1 summarizes those objectives and outcomes.

Table 1. Objectives and Outcomes Specified by Communication@Tech for LCC 3401

Emphases	Objectives	Outcomes
Rhetoric Rhetoric focuses on available means of persuasion, considering the synergy of factors such as context, audience, purpose, role, argument, organization, design, visuals, and conventions of language.	Analyze audiences, purposes, and strategies for communication in professional contexts. Explore the ethical and legal concerns posed in collecting, crafting, and disseminating technical information.	Fashion artifacts that address the exigencies of diverse contexts, exhibiting effective persuasive strategies, tact, and sensitivity to ethical and legal concerns. Present clear representations of technical information.
Process Processes for communication—for example, creating, planning, drafting, designing, rehearsing, revising, presenting, publishing—are recursive, not linear. Learning productive processes is as important as creating products.	Understand the individual and collaborative dimensions of professional communication, including revision and repurposing of documents and artifacts to meet the demands of different audiences, contexts, and cultures.	Construct, select, and deploy information to reflect individual, cultural, and/or organizational values while meeting the needs of the intended audience(s).
Modes and Media Activities and assignments should use a variety of modes and media— written, oral, visual, electronic, and nonverbal—singly and in combination. The context and culture of multimodality and multimedia are critical.	Distinguish and evaluate how multimodal communication — WOVEN (**W**ritten, **O**ral, **V**isual, **E**lectronic, and **N**onverbal)—suits the audiences, purposes, and contexts of professional communication.	Create WOVEN artifacts— such as memos, emails, proposals, reports, instructions, manuals, websites, and short and long presentations—that display strategic uses of generic and stylistic conventions.
Design Documents and other artifacts should arrange visual elements according to consistent, efficient, and effective principles.	Consider how principles and concepts such as repetition, proximity, alignment, chunking, and figure/ground contrast combine and contribute to the accessibility, comprehensibility, and usability of artifacts.	Use principles of document design to create and present accessible, comprehensible, and usable artifacts Integrate graphics to achieve maximum clarity in print documents, presentation slides, websites, and other artifacts.

This section of LCC 3401 has additional objectives and outcomes related to its focus on the health professions. Table 2 summarizes those objectives and outcomes.

Table 2. Objectives and Outcomes Specified by LCC 3401M: Communication for Pre-Health Students

Emphases	Objectives	Outcomes
Self-Marketing Future professionals should identify, develop, and emphasize their strengths.	Develop strategies for addressing professional gatekeepers, such as admissions and hiring committees.	Create and advise others about résumés, personal statements, micro-presentations, elevator pitches, and other common self-marketing tools.
Health Communication Health professionals use specific genres and conventions.	Study common genres and conventions, identifying distinguishing factors such as design, format, terminology, and tone.	Produce a video that showcases and passes on participants' proficiency in and knowledge about health communication.
Health Ethics The ethics of health communication are particularly complex.	Explore common considerations and quandaries, paying attention to the ethical concerns and constraints of all stakeholders.	Develop a manual that guides users from diverse backgrounds through common considerations and quandaries.

Assignments
This course involves a preparatory phase and three projects. The preparatory phase will provide a rhetorical foundation for technical communication, opportunities to refine your professional self-marketing, and information necessary to elect group leaders and plan your projects. The three projects will result in products that this class's client, Georgia Tech's Director of Pre-Health Advising, can use to help other pre-health students to succeed in their careers:

1. **The Website.** The class will create a website that provides resources and advice for gaining acceptance into graduate schools for the health professions.
2. **The Video**. The class will create a video that provides an overview about successful communication in the health professions.
3. **The Manual**. The class will create a manual that introduces and guides readers through the common ethical issues raised by communication in the health professions.

You will be a member (and, if elected, the leader) of the same group of students for the entire semester, but the nature of your group's work will change on each project. For one project, your group will complete Production assignments; for another, your group will complete Research assignments; for another, your group will complete Presentation assignments. For each project, you will also complete either a role memo or a performance evaluation. You will complete some assignments individually and others as a group. *All group members do not necessarily receive the same grade on a group assignment*. If the professor sees evidence of superior or inferior contributions to group assignments, he will adjust grades accordingly.

Preparatory Phase
Complete all of these assignments early in the semester.

- **Self-Introduction (25 points, submitted as an individual).** Provide a 2-minute overview of your interest in a health profession and your qualifications to work in (and possibly lead) a group.
- **Résumé (25 points, submitted as an individual).** Create a 1-page document that highlights the skills and interests that qualify you for a career in a specific health profession.
- **Personal Statement (25 points, submitted as an individual).** Create a document that expresses your reasons for choosing a health profession and the qualities, experiences, and goals that make you qualified. Follow an application's directions or use 500 words.
- **Project Plan (100 points, submitted as a group).** Create a document that explains how your group will manage its work during the three projects. Include a Gantt chart, tables, and/or other visuals that illustrate your plans.

Roles Memos and Performance Evaluations (work submitted individually)
If you are elected as a group leader, write a performance evaluation after each project. If you are not, write a role memo at the beginning of each project.

- **Role Memo (75 points—3 reports, 25 points each).** For each project, write a one- to two-page memo to the professor and your group leader that explains the role you will play. The professor and/or leader may use this memo to determine your success.

  OR

- **Performance Evaluation (75 points—3 reports, 25 points each).** After each project, write a one- to two-page memo to the professor that evaluates your group's performance.

Production (work submitted as a group)
Use research materials and the class's decisions to create a useful product.
- **Draft 1 (25 points).** Provide storyboards and/or a visually-enriched outline that presents your vision for a project's final product. Share the draft with the class for review.
- **Draft 2 (25 points).** Provide a rough draft of the product within its actual medium (i.e. a website, video, or manual). Share the draft with the class for review.
- **Draft 3 (50 points).** Provide a polished draft for presentation to the client.
- **Final Draft (150 points).** Submit a polished draft that reflects final input from the client, the class, and the professor. This draft will be available to the public.

Research
Provide resources and information necessary for creating a useful product.
- **Resource Report (25 points, submitted as a group).** Provide an annotated list of resources that production might use in a product. The report should highlight particularly useful information available in each source.
- **Test Plan (25 points, submitted as a group).** Design usability testing and/or a workshop method for the class to use during its review of a product's second draft.
- **Research Task Summary (100 points, submitted as an individual).** Write a memo of no more than three pages that summarizes the work you did to provide production with high-quality information for use in the product.
- **Quality of Research in Final Draft (50 points, no submission necessary).** The professor will assign you a grade based on how well the tasks you performed seem to have translated into high-quality information in the final product.

Presentation (work submitted as a group)
Demonstrate the product's usefulness to the client and the professor.
- **Presentation Outline (50 points).** Drawing on the storyboard workshop and subsequent discussions, provide a detailed outline of the presentation, including rough drafts or sketches of any planned visuals. Share the outline with the class for review.
- **Presentation (100 points).** Give a twenty-minute presentation to inform the client and the professor about the product and your recommendations for using it. Persuade your audience that the product will provide value for the client and other pre-health students.

Participation (150)
Participation in class discussions and activities is mandatory. Demonstrate your knowledge and share your insights. Maintaining class decorum is part of participation: noisy cell phones, disrespectful behavior, and other intrusions lower productivity and, therefore, your grade. "Disrespectful behavior" includes harassment of any kind, directed either at peers or at the instructor. This course might foster discussions of sensitive issues such as gender, race, religion, and sexuality. All viewpoints are welcome, but as individuals express themselves, they should avoid abusive or insulting language. The participation grade also includes scores on any quizzes or assignments not detailed here.

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:

$$\textbf{A} = 90\text{-}100; \textbf{B} = 80\text{-}89; \textbf{C} = 70\text{-}79; \textbf{D} = 60\text{-}69; \textbf{F} = 0\text{-}59$$

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 grade penalties. 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.* Attendance at guest speakers' and other presentations outside of class does not count in the same way as attendance during class meetings, but failure to attend presentations without my prior approval will hurt your participation grade.

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.

Academic Conduct

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. The following text appears on the website:
"Academic misconduct is any act that does or could improperly distort Student grades or other Student academic records. Such acts include but need not be limited to the following:

- Possessing, using or exchanging improperly acquired written or verbal information in the preparation of any essay, laboratory report, examination, or other assignment included in an academic course;
- Substitution for, or unauthorized collaboration with, a Student in the commission of academic requirements;
- Submission of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another person or person, without adequate credit notations indicating authorship (plagiarism);
- False claims of performance or work that has been submitted by the claimant;
- Alteration or insertion of any academic grade or rating so as to obtain unearned academic credit;
- Deliberate falsification of a written or verbal statement of fact to a member of the Faculty so as to obtain unearned academic credit;
- Forgery, alteration or misuse of any Institute document relating to the academic status of the Student.

While these acts constitute assured instances of academic misconduct, other acts of academic misconduct may be defined by the professor."
Work that violates the Honor Code will receive zero credit and may result in failure of the entire course. I will also report any serious misconduct to the Dean of Students.

Laptop Computer Use

This course asks you to bring a laptop computer to all class meetings. You may only use your laptop for class activities and note-taking. Using the laptop during class for other activities— such as email, web-surfing, or games—is rude and strictly prohibited. Inappropriate laptop use may result in grade penalties and/or expulsion from class.

Disability Notice

If you need accommodations for a disability, please contact me at the beginning of the semester so that we can discuss them. You should also contact Access Disabled Assistance Program for

Tech Students (ADAPTS) within the first two weeks of the semester so that they can help us 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 policies and assignments. I exercise this right rarely, but I often provide more detailed information during class. This syllabus is your guide. Keep it. Know it. Love it.

Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

Date	Topics and Readings	Deadlines
Mon. Jan. 5	Introduction: Why Health Communication?	
Wed. Jan. 7	Audience Analysis, *WHP* Ch. 1	
Mon. Jan. 12	Presentations 1, *PGPS* Ch. 15, 16, 17, & 18	
Wed. Jan. 14	Document Design, *WHP* Ch. 3 (to p. 76)	
Mon. Jan. 19	**MLK HOLIDAY: No Class**	
Wed. Jan. 21	Self-Introductions; Personal Statements	Intros and Resumes
Mon. Jan. 26	Self-Introductions; Personal Statements	Intros and Resumes; election
Wed. Jan. 28	Interviews	Personal statements
Mon. Feb. 2	Memos; Project Mgmt., *WHP* Ch. 3 (76 on)	Groups chosen
Wed. Feb. 4	Web design, *WHP* Ch. 11 (pp. 262-267)	Role Memo 1
Mon. Feb. 9	Research, *PGPS* Ch. 9, 10, 11	Project Plan
Wed. Feb. 11	Web project: audience analysis; research	
Mon. Feb. 16	Web project: storyboard workshop	Web Draft 1 (storyboards)
Wed. Feb. 18	Web project: research strategy	Resource Report
Mon. Feb. 23	Web project: presentation strategy	Pres. Outline; Test Plan
Wed. Feb. 25	Web project: usability testing	Web Draft 2
Mon. Mar. 2	Web project: presentation	Web Draft 3; presentation
Wed. Mar. 4	Web project: debriefing; self-reflection	Website Final Draft Research Task Summary
Mon. Mar. 9	Video project: audience analysis; research	Performance Evaluation 1
Wed. Mar. 11	Video project: storyboard workshop	Role Memo 2; Video Draft 1
Mon. Mar. 16	**SPRING BREAK: No Class**	
Wed. Mar. 18	**SPRING BREAK: No Class**	
Mon. Mar. 23	Video project: research strategy	Resource Report; Test Plan
Wed. Mar. 25	Video project: presentation strategy	Pres. Outline; Video Draft 2
Mon. Mar. 30	Video project: presentation	Video Draft 3; presentation
Wed. Apr. 1	Video project: debriefing; self-reflection	Video Final Draft Research Task Summary
Mon. Apr. 6	Manual project: audience analysis; research	Performance Evaluation 2
Wed. Apr. 8	Manual project: storyboard workshop	Role Memo 3; Manual Draft 1
Mon. Apr. 13	Manual project: research strategy	Resource Report; Test Plan
Wed. Apr. 15	Manual project: presentation strategy	Pres. Outline; Manual Draft 2
Mon. Apr. 20	Manual project: presentation	Manual Draft 3; presentation
Wed. Apr. 22	Manual project: debriefing; self-reflection	Manual Final Draft Research Task Summary
Mon. Apr. 27	**No Class**	Performance Evaluation 3

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 M 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, as well as the class's client permission to use copies of the work I do for this course, LCC 3401 M:
- ☐ as examples in this and other courses
- ☐ as examples in presentations and in print and electronic publications
- ☐ as tools for advising other Georgia Tech students

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

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_____
print campus address

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date