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Faculty Liberal Arts and Professional Studies

Writing Department

Introduction to Effective Writing and Research in Information Technology

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Course: AP/WRIT 2201.03   https://eclass.yorku.ca/course

Term: SU2
Last date to withdraw without receiving a grade: July 24

Prerequisite / Co-requisite: Students must have successfully completed all 1000 level required courses in Information Technology before taking WRIT 2201

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Course Instructor: Joan Allen
Use Writ 2201Section M (topic-Your last name) as a subject line in all correspondence by email)

Students will sometimes get notices and are responsible for checking e-class frequently for updates.

Expanded Course Description

This course develops knowledge of issues related to issues and solutions in communication in the field of information technology. We examine these in both the professional realm and in everyday life. We investigate the underpinnings and rationale for the principles governing technical writing; students in the course practice this mode of writing. Students further develop their writing capabilities with real world work on projects that require research into technical problems. They develop their own solutions and narrate this journey in several writing exercises. Another main topic of the course is writing within the field. Students create an e-Portfolio in which they show their work and critically analyse the process of its creation. Throughout the course, students are required to revise their work with guidance from writers in the field, the professor, and their peers in order to further their critical reflection on their development as researchers and writers.

Research Topics & Skills:

- formulating problems or research questions
-researching needed projects
- discovering search tools and strategies (appropriate choice of search engines and databases, constructing search terms)
- critical evaluation of information sources, and distinguishing between academic and other sources
- organization & management of information and sources (construction of bibliographies, citation)
-practicing revision as an essential step in the writing process
-analysing the difference between writing in everyday life and in professional contexts
-collaboration with and production of work in teams

Professional and Technical Writing Topics and Skills:

- learning to understand essentials of writing in IT, with a special focus on clear and effective descriptions and photography of technical information and processes
-organizing material systematically into microcontent (chunking)
-identifying and describing everyday life solutions in IT
- analysis of difference in modes of writing according to the intended audience
- developing writing processes, tools & strategies, including revision and editing
- developing a sense of user-centred design
- understanding the concept of usability testing of written information manuals
- document design (design principles, writing of
accessible documents, producing quality images and graphic design)

Other Professional Capabilities:
-professionalization of communication in self-presentation, orally, resumes and online communications
- project management, including timing and organization of steps
- peer consultation in some cases collaborative writing
- providing and receiving constructive feedback

This course includes both hands on learning and the development of academic formulation of arguments in writing. One focus is student projects that involve technical writing as well as implementation of practical solutions. The course will enhance these activities through reflective assignments which promote research and technical writing skills, and will strive to develop awareness of the particular social responsibility involved in producing technical writing.

Learning Outcomes

The overall goal of the course is that students will become more effective and confident as researchers and writers of technical information. On completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the particular nature and demands of technical writing.
2, Use advanced research skills to locate and critically evaluate information.
3. Use appropriate writing processes, skills and tools to communicate technical information accurately and clearly to both technical and non-technical readers.
4. Analyse specific writing tasks and texts in terms of their intended audiences. Students will be able to identify the needs of their audience and to write for that specific context.
5. Apply the knowledge and skills described above in their own writing and presentations.
6. Engage constructively in academic and professional commentary and collaborate effectively with colleagues in peer interactions.
7. Develop skills of self and peer-assessment.
8. Become more confident in their capabilities as researchers and writers and deepen the understanding of the process of research and writing.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This course will also provide exercises in photography and graphic design as part of the production of technical writing and to enhance the writing process and create greater intelligibility and interest for the intended audience.

IMPORTANT COURSE INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information, available on the Senate Committee on Academic Standards, Curriculum & Pedagogy webpage (see Reports, Initiatives, Documents).
https://secretariat.info.yorku.ca/files/CourseInformationForStudentsAugust2012-.pdf
- Senate Policy on Academic Honesty and the Academic Integrity Website
- Ethics Review Process for research involving human participants
- Course requirement accommodation for students with disabilities, including physical, medical, systemic, learning and psychiatric disabilities
- Student Conduct Standards
- Religious observance

Evaluation

The final grade for the course will be based on the following items weighted as indicated:

E-portfolio introduction- 5%

Fast Fix Draft of proposal- 10%

Checkpoint 1 and Checkpoint 2- 10%

Fast Fix Final-10% (Project Proposal and Revision)

Fast Fix Reflection-10%

Quiz or timed assignment post-10%

E-Portfolio- 25%

Participation- 20%
This includes contributions to forums and peer reviews.

Note: Due dates are subject to some minor changes based on the schedule of a third party who we correspond with about some assignments. E-class will be used for submission of assignments and some responses but will not be used as the course gradebook.