

Writing 2130G

Building Better (Communication) Bridges: Rhetoric and Professional Communication for Engineers

Winter 2024

Lecture Section 650 (online, asynchronous)

Course Description and Objectives

This course introduces students to rhetorical principles and the practices of written, oral, and visual communication in professional engineering contexts. Particular attention is paid to identifying and understanding audience, context and purpose; the grammar and effective style of Standard Written English; modes of persuasion; interpersonal communication; the negotiation of cultural difference; and effective scholarly research practices. Students will learn strategies for drafting and designing technical and academic documents and for approaching the editing and revision of those documents. As well, they will gain experience in organizing research effectively for presentation, composing clear and useful visual aids, and presenting research to their peers and the broader public with confidence.

Students who successfully complete Writing 2130 should be able to do the following:

- Write and speak with a greater degree of clarity, confidence, and critical self-awareness to different kinds of audiences
- Understand what constitutes effective, ethical, and correct written and oral communication in a variety of rhetorical situations (and why)
- Identify and define various rhetorical contexts for professional communication, including cultural contexts
- Identify, correct, and avoid errors in composition, grammar, and mechanics
- Distinguish between primary and secondary sources (research vs. review materials) and employ the methods of finding and evaluating such sources efficiently and correctly and of assessing their relative merits
- Understand what is at stake in conducting a review of scholarly literature
- Integrate source materials into written assignments both ethically and correctly, using IEEE documentation
- Revise papers and oral presentations through multiple drafts
- Understand basic principles of document design and visual rhetoric and apply them to a research poster

Antirequisite

Engineering Sciences 2211F/G: Engineering Communications

Prerequisite

Engineering Sciences 1050: Introductory Engineering Design and Innovation Studio

Required Texts

R. Irish and P.E. Weiss, *Engineering Communication: From Principles to Practice*, 2nd ed. Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2013.

W.E. Messenger *et al.*, *The Canadian Writer's Handbook: Third Essentials Edition*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2023.

These required texts are available as a package through the Western Bookstore. You can order copies here: https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=W2023A&courses%5B0%5D=650_UW/WRI2130F

IEEE Citation and Documentation Guide

<https://iee-dataport.org/sites/default/files/analysis/27/IEEE%20Citation%20Guidelines.pdf>

Course Requirements

Multiple-choice Quizzes (2 @ 10% each)	20%
Assignment #1: Description of an important Engineering problem for two audiences (750-1250 words total for two documents)	15%
Assignment #2: Multi-component Research Project, as follows:	
Research "Presentation" (5 minute recorded voice-over, 5-7 slides)	15%
Research Poster	15%
Research Essay (1250-1500 words)	20%
Weekly tutorial discussion postings/responses	15%

Submitting Assignments

Assignments are due on the date specified, uploaded through the relevant "Assignments" link **on your tutorial's OWL site**. Do not email me (or your TA) any assignments! **Unless you have been granted an extension, late assignments will be penalized a full letter grade at least and may not be accepted at all**. You must talk to your TA about extensions ahead of the due date; they are not automatic.

Note: When using sources in any written assignment, you will be expected to follow IEEE standards for citation and documentation (as well as for formatting). By uploading your assignments to OWL, you will be automatically submitting them to Turnitin for plagiarism checking. Turnitin will generate a report for you, detailing the percentage of your paper that has been drawn from sources; you will be able to see the report, as will your TA. No assignment will be graded until that report is generated and viewed.

Attendance and Participation

It should go without saying that attendance at class is required to improve as a communicator. The most successful classrooms—physical or online—have students and instructors equally engaged in thinking about and discussing the readings, assignments, and weekly topics. **You are expected to complete the assigned readings each week**. As the current circumstances require this class to be fully online, we do not meet formally; thus, attendance and participation on your tutorial discussion board are connected. Online courses are typically asynchronous (and this one is no different), but they are not wholly self-paced. You must attend and participate in class (defined as logging into your tutorial's OWL section and interacting with your peers and TA by posting responses to questions and prompts in the relevant weekly topic sections under the "Forums" link).

Your class discussion grade will be based on whether you have sufficiently fulfilled the posting requirements, which are listed in more detail below. In general, the grade will be determined by 1) the quality of your posts each week, 2) the frequency and number of quality posts made.

1) Quality of Posting

All posts on your tutorial discussion forum must

- Contribute something meaningful to the board.

- Support your response with sufficient reasons and/or evidence.
- Demonstrate that you have either completed the assigned lecture and/or textbook reading (and/or that you have read your classmates' posts).
- Display good grammar and organization.

Posts should not

- Employ disrespectful, insulting, or offensive language. **Note in particular that the use of racist language or any language that works against the values of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion will not be tolerated.**
- Be unrelated to the weekly topic.
- Be too long (more than one screen length) or too short (a sentence or two).
- Consist (in the case of responding to classmates) only of statements like "I agree with you" or "Great comment!" Such posts do not contribute any substance to the discussion; thus, they do not count as posts.

2) Frequency and Number of Posts

You must post on at least two separate days covering that particular week's forum prompt (in addition to meeting the standards defined under "Quality of Posting"). At least **one post must initiate a new thread** to the discussion, and at least **one post must be a reply to either your tutorial leader or another student**. This means at least **two posts per week**. For the purposes of the class discussion, all weeks run from Monday to Sunday; late posts (i.e., posts that appear after the discussion concludes on Sundays at 11:59 pm) will not count toward your participation grade.

In assessing your participation, we may also look at the number of posts you've read. For instance, if during Week 3, your tutorial has posted 50 times in total and you only read 8 of those posts, that fact may not reflect positively in assigning your discussion grade.

Scholastic Offences, including Plagiarism

All essays and assignments must be written **in your own words**. Whenever you take an idea or a passage of text from another author, you must acknowledge this debt by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing of all quotation, paraphrase, and summary via in-text citations. **Please note that plagiarism also includes double submission: submitting work from one course for credit in another without written permission from both instructors.** Plagiarism is a major academic offence. Scholastic offences such as plagiarism are taken very seriously and attended by academic penalties that may include expulsion from the program. You may read the appropriate policy on what constitutes a scholastic offence by following this link:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

As noted, in this course you will be required to submit an electronic copy of the final version of each of your written assignments to turnitin.com through your tutorial section's OWL homepage.

An Important Note on the Use of AI: In this course, students are permitted to use AI tools for information gathering and preliminary research purposes **only** (unless otherwise indicated in the assignment instructions). These tools are intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. It is essential, however, that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize, develop, and

articulate their own ideas, arguments, and perspectives. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploration, but students are expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources and avoiding plagiarism in any form. **Note that for all assignments completed outside of class, the instructor can require you to attend an interview to discuss your work and/or review any drafts and research notes before a mark is finalized.** Assignments should always reflect students' own thoughts and constitute independent written work. By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and ethical learning environment that promotes critical thinking, supports independent inquiry, and encourages original written contributions.

Prerequisite Checking

Ensuring you have the correct prerequisite(s) is your responsibility. The following notation articulates the Senate regulation with respect to the student needing to be responsible for ensuring that course prerequisites have been completed successfully or special permission from the Dean obtained:

“Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.”

Accommodation Policy

Senate language requires all requests for accommodation for a grade component of **10% or more** to go to academic counselling. That same section, however, allows for (and encourages) instructors to deal directly with accommodation requests for grade components less than 10%. Here's the relevant Senate language:

Accommodation by Instructor for work worth less than 10% of the overall grade in a course:

Instructors are encouraged, in the first instance, to arrange participation requirements and multiple small assignments in such a way as to allow students some flexibility. A student seeking academic accommodation for any work worth less than 10% must contact the instructor or follow the appropriate Department or course specific instructions provided on the course outline.

In arranging accommodation, instructors will use good judgment and ensure fair treatment for all students. Instructors must indicate on the course outline how they will be dealing with work worth less than 10% of the total course grade. In particular, instructors must indicate whether medical documentation will be required for absences, late assignments or essays, missed tests, laboratory experiments or tutorials, etc. Where medical documentation is required, such documentation must be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Academic Counselling/Dean's office, who will make the determination whether accommodation is warranted. Given the University's Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy (https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/general/privacy.pdf), **instructors may not collect medical documentation.**

Medical Accommodation Policy

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that medical situations are deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. However, in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet their academic responsibilities.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the appropriate Dean's office (the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration/home Faculty) together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. These documents will be retained in the student's file and will be held in confidence in accordance with the University's Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy. Once the petition and supporting documents have been received and assessed, appropriate academic accommodation shall be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Academic accommodation may include extension of deadlines, waiver of attendance requirements for classes/labs/tutorials, arranging Special Exams or Incompletes, re-weighting course requirements, or granting late withdrawals without academic penalty. Academic accommodation shall be granted only where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration, and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete their academic responsibilities. (Note – it will not be sufficient to provide documentation indicating simply that the student “was seen for a medical reason” or “was ill.”)

Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner.”

Documentation from Family Physicians/Nurse Practitioners and Walk-In Clinics

A Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is required where a student is seeking academic accommodation. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician/nurse practitioner or walk-in clinic. An SMC can be downloaded at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Documentation from Student Health Services

At the time of illness, students should make an appointment with a physician/nurse practitioner at Student Health Services. During this appointment, request a Student Medical Certificate from the Physician/Nurse Practitioner.

Documentation from Hospital Urgent Care Centres or Emergency Departments

Students should request that an SMC be filled out. Students may bring this form with them, or request alternative Emergency Department documentation. Documentation should be secured at the time of the initial visit to the Emergency Department. Where it is not possible for a student to have an SMC completed by the attending physician, the student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that their ability to meet their academic responsibilities was seriously affected.”

Please note that individual instructors **will not under any circumstances** accept or read medical documentation directly offered by a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds or for related reasons (e.g. to explain an absence from class which may result in a grade penalty under an ‘Attendance’ policy in the course). **All medical documentation must** be submitted to the Academic Counselling or Undergraduate office of a student's home Faculty.

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing (email), prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519.661.3030 (during class hours) or 519.433.2023 after class hours and on weekends.

Statement on Gender-based Sexual Violence

Western [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced gender-based or sexual violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, [here](#). To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support and Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Special Requests: Special Examinations, Incomplete Standing, Aegrotat Standing

Please refer to the “Information for All Students in a Writing Course” for more detailed information. Briefly, remember that your instructor does not have the discretion to initiate, consider, or grant (or not) such requests; you must go directly to the Dean’s office of your home faculty.

Intellectual Property and Copyright

All instructor-written materials (e.g. PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for students’ personal use within the course, and remain the instructor’s intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses, without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor’s content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.

Lecture, Reading, and Assignment Schedule

Date	Lec./Tut. Focus and Assignments	Readings
Week 1: Jan. 8-12	Introduction to the course/syllabus Discussion of Assignment 1 Tutorial: Introductions	Syllabus and introductory documents posted to OWL
Week 2: Jan. 15-19	Assessing the rhetorical situation: Purpose, genre, and audience Tutorial: Grammar basics: word classes	<i>Engineering Communication (EC)</i> : Introduction, Ch. 1, Ch. 3 (pg. 130-36), Appendix C (pg. 337-39, 342-45), Appendix D, Appendix E <i>Canadian Writer’s Handbook (CWH)</i> : Chapters 6 (all), 7a-b, 8a-f, 10-13 (all)

Week 3: Jan. 22-26	Purpose, genre, and audience Tutorial: Grammar basics continued: Sentence elements (clauses and phrases)	EC: Ch. 4; Appendix A, Appendix B (pg. 328-35) CWH: Ch.1 a-b, 3
Week 4: Jan. 29- Feb.2	Oral presentation basics Tutorial: Writing correctly: Sentence boundary errors	EC: Ch. 6 (pg. 213-16); Ch. 9 (pg. 280-92, 297-306, 307-8) CWH: Ch. 2, 5a-c
Week 5: Feb. 5-9	Oral presentation basics Discussion of Assignment 2 Tutorial: Writing correctly: Punctuation Quiz 1 (due by 11:59 pm Friday)	 CWH: Ch. 15-18, 25; EC: Appendix F
Week 6: Feb. 12-16	Employment Communications Tutorial: Writing elegantly: Emphasis and “flow” (nominalizations, active vs. passive voice) Assignment 1 (due by 11:59 pm Fri.)	 CWH: Ch. 4, 8h; EC: Ch. 3, 5, 6
Reading Week		
Week 7: Feb.26- Mar. 1	Developing and Designing an Argument: Visual Rhetoric Tutorial: Writing elegantly: Emphasis and “flow” (continued)	CWH: Ch. 1d-g, 33; EC: Ch. 8, 9 (pg. 292-97, 306-7)
Week 8: Mar. 4-8	Visual Rhetoric (cont.): Research Posters Tutorial: Faulty Parallelism; Modifier Problems Research Presentation (due by 11:59 pm Friday)	CWH: Ch. 5d-e, 5h; EC: Ch. 2, 8
Week 9: Mar. 11-15	Visual Rhetoric (cont.) Citing, Incorporating, and Documenting Sources Tutorial: Visual Rhetoric and effective Research Presentations Quiz 2 (due by 11:59 pm Friday)	
Week 10: Mar. 18-22	Strategies for Engaging with Sources Effectively Tutorial: Thesis statement review	CWH: Ch. 34-36

	Research Poster (due by 11:59 pm Friday)	
Week 11: Mar. 25-29	IEEE Citation and Documentation Tutorial: Incorporating Sources	CWH: Appendix A; IEEE Citation and Documentation Guide (linked on syllabus)
Week 12: Apr. 1-5 Apr. 8	Research Essay Tips and Strategies Tutorial: Writing Research Essays; Research Essay help/consultation Research Essay (due by 11:59 pm, Monday Apr. 8)	