

Writing 2130F**Building Better (Communication) Bridges: Rhetoric and Professional Communication for Engineers****Distance Studies Intersession 2026**

Lecture Section 650 (online, asynchronous)

Instructor: Dr. J. Johnston
Email: jjohns6@uwo.ca**Office Hours: Tues. 9:30-11:30 (via email or by appointment via Zoom, but you may of course email me at any time)****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 with a greater degree of clarity, confidence, and critical self-awareness to different kinds of audiences [CEAB Graduate Attribute Indicator: CS 3]
- Speak with a greater degree of clarity, confidence, and critical self-awareness to different kinds of audiences [CS 2]
- Understand what constitutes effective, ethical, and correct written and oral communication in a variety of rhetorical situations (and why) [CS 2, 3]
- Identify and define various rhetorical contexts for professional communication, including cultural contexts [CS 2, 3]
- Identify and correct errors in composition, grammar, diction, and mechanics [CS 3]
- 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 [CS 3]
- Revise papers and oral presentations through multiple drafts [CS 2, 3]
- Understand basic principles of document design and visual rhetoric and apply them to a research poster [CS 3]

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=N2026&courses%5B0%5D=650_UW/WR12130F

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 a general audience (750 words)	20%
Assignment #2: Multi-component Research Project, as follows:	
Research Poster	25%
Research Essay (1250-1500 words)	35%

Note: Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/>) regularly for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class. If students need assistance with the course OWL site, they can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800

Submitting Assignments

Assignments are due on the date specified on this schedule, uploaded to OWL Brightspace through the relevant "Assignments" link. Do not email me any assignments! **Unless I have granted you an extension, late assignments will be penalized a full letter grade at least and may not be accepted at all.** You must talk to me 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 secondary sources; you will be able to see the report, as will I. No assignment will be graded until that report is generated and viewed.

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:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.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 assignments to turnitin.com through your lecture section's OWL Brightspace homepage.

A Very Important Note on the Use of AI: In this course, the use of AI (such as automatic translation tools, grammar checkers, ChatGPT...) is prohibited, unless there has been discussion with and agreement by the instructor before beginning an assignment. If AI use is suspected, the instructor will ask for research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and/or other materials used in preparing assignments. Students are expected to retain these materials until after final grades have been entered. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, students may be asked to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against them.

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.”

Academic Consideration Policy

University policy on academic considerations is described [here](#). This policy requires that all requests for academic considerations must be accompanied by a self-attestation.

Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline.

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests through the Student Absence Portal, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage:

https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/index.html

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.

All academic consideration requests must include supporting documentation, which may include a Student Medical Certificate. Recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request

without supporting documentation in this course. **However, the following assessments are excluded from this, and therefore always require formal supporting documentation:**

- **Assignments 1 and 2 (all components):** Because the submission deadlines for these assessments already includes flexibility in the form of three-day windows for submission without penalty, the instructor reserves the right to deny academic consideration for assignments which are submitted following the end of the period of flexibility. **Students are expected to submit each of these assignments by the deadline listed below. However, should extenuating circumstances arise, students do not need to request Academic Consideration as they are permitted to submit their assignment up to 72 hours past the deadline without any late penalty.** Should students submit their assessment beyond 72 hours past the listed deadline, a late penalty as described above under “Submitting Assignments” will be applied.

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.

Other Student 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

Week/Date	Lecture Focus and Assignments	Readings
Week 1: May 4-8	Introduction to the course/syllabus Writing correctly: Grammar basics (word classes and sentence elements)	Engineering Communication (EC): pg. 130-36, Appendix A, Appendix C (pg. 337-39, 342-45), Appendix D, Appendix E Canadian Writer’s Handbook (CWH): Chapters 1 a-b, 3 and 6 (all), 7a-b, 8a-f, 10-13 (all)
Week 2: May 11-15	Assessing the rhetorical situation: Purpose, genre, and audience Writing correctly: Sentence boundary errors Quiz 1 (due by 11:59 pm Friday)	EC: Introduction, Ch. 1, 3 (pg. 130-36), Ch. 4, Appendix A, Appendix B (pg. 333-35 [“Three Common Problems...”]) CWH: Ch.1 a-b, 2 (all), 5a-c
Week 3: May 18-22	Oral presentation basics Writing correctly: Punctuation Assignment 1 (due by 11:59 pm Friday)	EC: Ch. 6 (pg. 213-16), Ch. 9 (pg. 280-92, 297-306, 307-8), Appendix F CWH: Ch. 15-18, 25
Week 4: May 25-29	Visual rhetoric: General principles Writing clearly: Emphasis and “flow” (nominalizations, active vs. passive voice), faulty parallelism	EC: Ch. 3, 5, 8 (pg. 245-74), 9 (pg. 292-97, 306-7) CWH: Ch. 4, 5h, 8h
Week 5: June 1-5	Visual rhetoric: Research posters Thesis statements Assignment 2 Research Poster Quiz 2 (both due by 11:59 pm Friday)	EC: Ch. 8 (pg. 275-79) CWH: Ch. 1 c-d, 33
Week 6: June 8-12	Engaging with sources effectively Research essay tips and strategies IEEE citation and documentation Assignment 2 Research Essay (due by 11:59 pm Sunday June 14th)	EC: Ch. 2, Appendix H CWH: Ch. 34-5, 36e

End of Distance Studies Intersession term: enjoy your Summer!