SAULT COLLEGE OF APPLIED ARTS & TECHNOLOGY
SAULT STE MARIE, ON

COURSE OUTLINE

Course Title: Technical Communication

Code No.: CMM210-3   **Semester**: Fall/Winter

Program: Engineering Technology & Science and
                Natural Resources

Author: Language and Communication Department

Date: August 1999   **Previous Outline Dated**: August 1998

Approved: _____   _____
                          Dean   Date

Total Credits: 3   **Prerequisite(s)**: CMM110

Length of Course: 3 hrs./week   **Total Credit Hours**: 48

Technical Communication   CMM210-3
COURSE NAME   **CODE NO.**

I.   COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides training in technical communication.   Emphasis is given to memos, letters, forms, and reports. Oral reporting and its importance on the job are also included. The effective use of computers to research and generate technical documents is an essential component of this course. The theory of writing is taught through the writing process.

II.   LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ELEMENTS OF THE PERFORMANCE:

A.   Learning Outcomes:
(Generic Skills Learning Outcomes placement on the course outline will be determined and communicated at a later date.)

1. Recognize the needs and expectations of the various audience levels.
2. Produce accurate, coherent abstracts/executive summaries.
3. Produce accurate, well-organized, technical writing assignments and reports that are college-level quality and address an identified audience and purpose.
4. Employ computers accurately and efficiently to research and produce reports.
5. Document materials from various sources using specific formats.
6. Produce an employment package.
7. Deliver well-organized, oral presentations that involve effective visuals.

B.   Learning Outcomes and Elements of the Performance:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Recognize the needs and expectations of the various audience levels.

Potential elements of the performance:
• Explain the theory of communication
• Identify barriers to effective communication and practice how to overcome them
• Assess the audience's needs and characteristics
• Determine your goal in the communication
• Identify the most effective form of communication
• Anticipate audience response

Technical Communication   CMM210-3
COURSE NAME   **CODE NO.**

II.   LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ELEMENTS OF THE PERFORMANCE (Continued):

2. Produce accurate, coherent abstracts/executive summaries.

Potential elements of the performance:
- Ensure inclusion of all main elements—introduction, discussion, and major conclusions/recommendations
- Proofread and rewrite to make the abstract concise and fluid

3. Produce accurate, well-organized, technical writing assignments and reports that are college-level quality and address an identified audience and purpose.

Potential elements of the performance:
- Identify the audience and purpose for the document
- Identify the uses and types of technical reports
- Determine the most suitable format for presenting technical information
- Create accurate and specific reports using various formats
- Formulate effective introductory/problem statements
- Use active and passive voice and other emphatic techniques
- Identify the use, format, and content of all components of the formal report
- Incorporate effective graphics into reports
- Draw accurate, supported, logical conclusions and recommendations
- Use research and documentation as support in reports
- Use appropriate technical language and style
- Proofread and edit all work

4. Employ computers accurately and efficiently to produce reports.

Potential elements of the performance:
- Adjust and proofread for content
- Edit for errors in structure, style, and mechanics
- Enhance the production of documents using the computer
- Incorporate appropriate graphics
- Design clear, easily–read technical documents for specific audiences and purposes
- Proofread and edit work for correctness using spell-check, thesaurus, grammar check, and peer editing

Technical Communication   CMM210-3
COURSE NAME   **CODE NO.**

II.   LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ELEMENTS OF THE PERFORMANCE (Continued):

5.   Document materials from various sources using specific formats.

Potential elements of the performance:
- Identify the nature of the information to be documented
- Investigate various sources
- Select relevant material
- Evaluate bias
- Distinguish primary and secondary sources
- Use appropriate sources to support the document's purpose
- Select a consistent documentation format

6. Produce an employment package.

Potential elements of the performance:
- Conduct a relevant job search using a variety of sources
- Select relevant information
- Summarize skills, knowledge, and experience
- Choose a format and create a resume that best presents their abilities
- Write a concise, accurate, organized, effective cover letter
- Design a unified, professional resume and cover-letter package using appropriate software

7. Deliver well-organized, oral presentations that involve effective visuals.

Potential elements of the Performance:
- Gather and organize relevant material
- Determine how to present the material in the most effective manner
- Formulate an effective introduction
- Anticipate and recognize typical audience responses
- Analyze the audience and the purpose of the presentation
- Choose an appropriate technical format
- Produce effective visual aids
- Rehearse and adapt the presentation
- Deliver well-organized, oral presentations individually or collaboratively
- Field questions effectively

Technical Communication   CMM210-3
COURSE NAME   **CODE NO.**

III. TOPICS:

Note: These topics sometimes overlap several areas of skill development and are not necessarily intended to be explored in isolated learning units or in the order below.

1. Communication Theory
2. Language and Style in Technical Reports
3. Objectivity in Technical Writing
4. Letters and Memos
5. Informal Reports
6. Employment Package
7. Oral Presentation
8. Graphics and Document Design
9. The Formal Report
10. Research and Documentation

IV.   REQUIRED RESOURCES / TEXTS / MATERIALS:

 1. <u>Technical Writing: A Practical Approach</u> (2nd Canadian Ed.), Pfeiffer & Boogerd, Prentice-Hall.
2. A dictionary and thesaurus
3. Sault College Language and Communication Guidelines
4. Two 3.5 computer disks (dedicated to English)

V.   EVALUATION PROCESS / GRADING SYSTEM
MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS AND TESTING:
(Refer also to the Language and Communication Guidelines)
The professor will announce which of the following will be completed in class under test conditions (minimum of 20%):

1. Students will write a minimum of five short assignments using technical report formats, such as:

a) Abstract
b) Proposal/feasibility report
c) Accident/incident/occurrence report
d) Technical Instruction or description
e) Field/trip report   **50%**
f) Investigation/evaluation report
g) Progress/periodic report
h) Lab report
i) Problem analysis/recommendation report

Technical Communication   CMM210-3
COURSE NAME   **CODE NO.**

V. EVALUATION PROCESS / GRADING SYSTEM
MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS AND TESTING (continued):

2. Oral presentation   **15%**

3. Job package   **10%**

4. Students must write and submit **one** of the following:
a) a formal report
b) an exam (if required by the program area)
    featuring a report format   **25%**

TOTAL   **100%**

Notes:
1. Professors reserve the right to adjust the course as they deem necessary to meet the needs of students.
2. Professors will deduct marks for any grammar and fundamental errors in final submissions.
3. Marking schemes for assignments will vary from professor to professor and from assignment to assignment. This flexibility recognizes that professors need to vary their approaches as they assist students with differing levels of competence to meet the learning outcomes of the course and to respond to program areas.

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT (GRADING METHOD):

Students will be assessed on the basis of their short technical assignments, oral presentations, job application package, and formal report and/or report exam.

The following letter grades will be assigned in accordance with college policy and the Language and Communication Department Guidelines:

A+	Consistently outstanding	(90% - 100%)
A	Outstanding achievement	(80% - 89%)
B	Consistently above average achievement	(70% - 79%)
C	Satisfactory or acceptable achievement in all areas subject to assessment	(60% - 69%)
R	Repeat - The student has not achieved the objectives of the course, and the course must be repeated	(less than 60%)

Technical Communication   CMM210-3
COURSE NAME   **CODE NO.**

V.   EVALUATION PROCESS / GRADING SYSTEM (Continued):

CR Credit exemption
X   A temporary grade, limited to situations
      with extenuating circumstances, giving
      a student additional time to complete
      course requirements

NOTE: Students may be assigned a mid-term grade of "R" for unsatisfactory
         performance.

TIME FRAME

Technical Reporting CMM210 involves three periods per week for the semester. One of
these hours will be scheduled in a computer lab. Students are expected to attend class
and to participate in class activities.

VI.   SPECIAL NOTES:

Special Needs
Students with special needs (e.g. physical limitations, visual impairments, hearing
impairments, learning disabilities) are encouraged to discuss required accommodations
with the professor and/or contact the Special Needs Office.

Complementary Activities
To meet course objectives, students should expect to match each scheduled class hour
with independent study.

Plagiarism
To plagiarise is to "take and use as one's own (thoughts [ideas], writings, inventions, etc.
of another); especially to take and use a passage, plot, etc. from the work of another
writer." (Gage Canadian Dictionary, 861)

Students should refer to the definition of "academic dishonesty" in the "Statement of
Students' Rights and Responsibilities" (on-line Intranet for Sault College). Also, in order
to collaborate on an assignment, students need prior permission from the professor.

Students who engage in "academic dishonesty" will receive an automatic failure for that
submission and/or other such penalty, up to and including expulsion from the course.

In order to protect students from inadvertent plagiarism, to protect the material
referenced, and to credit the author of the material, it is the policy of the department to
employ a documentation format for referencing source material.

Technical Communication   CMM210-3
COURSE NAME   **CODE NO.**

VI.   SPECIAL NOTES (cont'd):

<u>Advanced Standing</u>
Students who have completed an equivalent post-secondary course must bring relevant
documents to the Coordinator, Language and Communication Department:
- A copy of course outline
- A copy of the transcript verifying successful completion of the equivalent course

Note: A copy of the transcript must be on file in the Registrar's Office.

<u>Retention of Course Outlines</u>
Students are responsible for retaining all course outlines for possible future use in
gaining advanced standing at other post-secondary institutions.

Substitute course information is available at the Registrar's office.

VII.   PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Students who have related employment-centered experience should see the Prior
Learning Assessment (PLA) Coordinator.