

The University of British Columbia

CPEN 281 – TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

2021-2022 WINTER TERM 1

SYLLABUS

INSTRUCTOR

Hartaj Sanghara is the instructor for this course/section. Students can contact me during class hours and by email at Hartaj.Sanghara@ubc.ca. Students may arrange an appointment or drop in during online office hours. Please note that online office hours will be scheduled weekly for our class.

COURSE OBJECTIVE

The course is designed to introduce students in the applied sciences to aspects of technical communication, including business correspondence, report preparation, and oral presentation.

COURSE MATERIALS

The following text is recommended for this course:

- Messenger, W. E., et al. (2017). *The Concise Canadian Writer's Handbook*. 3rd ed. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.

The e-book version is available at the UBC Bookstore. Please visit the UBC Bookstore website and see textbooks at <https://bookstore.ubc.ca/textbooks>. In addition, the course materials will be provided in class and on Canvas.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND INFORMATION

- **Prerequisite** – The prerequisite is three credits for first-year English (likely APSC 176 or ENGL 112), as stated in *The University of British Columbia Calendar*.
- **Course format** – The course format is three hours per week; regular attendance and participation are required.
- Missed class/coursework and feedback will not be retaught or repeated during office hours.
- All assignments must be submitted on or before the due date specified in the syllabus and by the instructor. All assignments must conform to specifications outlined by your instructor.
- The instructor may require two weeks to mark assignments.
- No student is permitted to record electronically material discussed and/or shown in class without the explicit permission of the instructor.
- The minimum penalty for plagiarism is a zero for an assignment; the maximum penalty is a zero for the course.
- No assignment may be submitted to any other instructor of any course for a grade.
(see *The UBC Calendar* – Academic Misconduct and Disciplinary Measures
<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959>).
- Each team must submit an original formal report prepared for the current session and term for CPEN 281 only.
- **An assignment and examination so weak in grammar and mechanics that these would not meet the university-level writing standards at UBC will receive a failing mark.**
- **Note: In order to pass CPEN 281, students must achieve a cumulative, passing grade (at least 50%) on all individual assignments and exams, and a passing grade (at least 50%) on the group project.**

COURSE FORMAT

This course will be delivered in class and on the course website via Canvas and Zoom meetings/sessions as well.

GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

The course will contribute to students developing the Graduate Attribute as identified by the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board:

7. **Communication skills:** *An ability to communicate complex engineering concepts within the profession and with society at large. Such ability includes reading, writing, speaking and listening, and the ability to comprehend and write effective reports and design documentation, and to give and effectively respond to clear instructions.*

ASSIGNMENTS AND ALLOCATION OF MARKS

Collaborative Project and Assignments: 50 Marks

- Collaborative Project and Assignments
 - Correspondence (5 marks)
 - Proposal (10 marks)
 - Draft/Outline (10 marks)
 - Formal Report (15 marks)
 - Group Presentation (10 marks)
 - Technical Description (included in the report)
- The formal report must be technical in nature; it should include field and/or library research. The report must present an investigation into a technical topic/problem or the progress of a design project related to engineering.
- The topic must be approved by the instructor; it may not be changed without the instructor's permission.
- The content of the formal report, from the introduction to the conclusion, should be 2,000-2,500 words or approximately 8-10 typed pages, excluding prefatory material, illustrations, and appendices.
- The report can include either a mechanism description or a process description in the report or the appendix. The technical description must be approved by the course instructor.
- The graphic aids must meet the standards specified in the course materials.

Individual Assignments and Exams: 50 Marks

- Midterm Exam (15 marks)
- Final Exam (35 marks)

Total: 100 Marks

Note: In order to pass CPEN 281, students must achieve a cumulative, passing grade (at least 50%) on all individual assignments and exams, and a passing grade (at least 50%) on the group project. The instructor may adjust the final grade by up to 1-2% to reflect a student's overall commitment to the course and to round off the final grade.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Academic Integrity. Students should not cheat, copy, plagiarize or mislead others with respect to their individual work. All student submissions should be original work undertaken by the student alone (except for team assignments), with attribution given as appropriate to all other sources of information and ideas. In examinations, students should not seek aid from others, nor give aid to others, nor make use of unauthorized materials or aids. Generally, students are deemed to be aware of and adhere to the relevant University regulations as provided in the link below and in particular those relating to *Academic Honesty and Standards* and to *Student Conduct and Discipline*. All cases of suspected academic misconduct must be reported to the Dean's Office. Please refer to University academic policies and services at the link below and related links:

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,0,0,0>

Classroom Etiquette. All students are expected to adhere to the highest professional standards of classroom etiquette: they should not arrive late to classes; and cell phones, laptops and other communication devices should only be used as appropriate for the course that is underway.

UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS

Nothing in this syllabus can contravene any Academic Calendar regulation or University policy. In resolving any discrepancy, Academic Calendar regulations and University policy take precedence. Please refer to University academic policies and services at the link below and related links:

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,0,0,0>

These include reference to *Academic Assessment*, *Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities*, *Academic Concession*, *Attendance*, *Review of Assigned Standing*, and *Supplemental Examination Policy*.

BC HEALTH GUIDELINES AND UBC REQUIREMENTS

Provincial Health Orders and UBC policy now mandate masks in all indoor public spaces on campus. These spaces include classrooms, residence halls, libraries, and common areas. Students who wish to request an exemption to the indoor mask mandate must do so based on one of the grounds for exemption detailed in [the PHO Order on Face Coverings \(COVID-19\)](#). Such requests must be made through the Center for Accessibility (Vancouver campus).

Please visit <https://rapidtesting.covid19.ubc.ca>, log in to the disclosure site and complete the process as outlined. It includes questions about your COVID-19 vaccination status. Please note that you will require your CWL and complete the declaration.

Please find more information below on how you can protect yourself during the pandemic and on campus.

BC Health Guidelines and UBC Requirements

UBC updates information for in-class, COVID protocols based on guidance from the BC Public Health Office. Please complete the self-assessment for COVID symptoms daily before coming to class using this tool: <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>.

Vaccine and Health Etiquette

You can check this website to find out if you should self-isolate or self-monitor: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/self-isolation#Who>. Please do not come to class if you have COVID symptoms, have recently tested positive for COVID, or are required to quarantine.

Student Resources

The following links provide access to resources, which offer support to students.

Well-being:

- UBC Health and Wellbeing: [Health and wellbeing | Student Services \(ubc.ca\)](#) This is a central point that provides links to many resources to support your mental and physical health. Review this page *before* there is an emergency.
- First Nations Longhouse: [Longhouse - Indigenous Portal \(ubc.ca\)](#) “The First Nations Longhouse serves as a “home away from home,” as well as an academic, social, spiritual, and cultural hub for Indigenous students attending UBC.”
- Sexual Assault Support Centre: [UBC AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre \(amssasc.ca\)](#) The AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre is committed to the education and empowerment of people of all genders who are survivors of sexualized violence, as well as their friends and family.
- UBC Trans and Non-binary Student Guide: [UBCEIO_v05 \(accessible\).pdf - Google Drive](#) A guide written in Summer 2020 describing resources and support on campus for trans and non-binary students.

Academic Services

- Engineering Academic Services (EAS): [Academic Advising - Engineering Academic Services \(ubc.ca\)](#) Engineering Academic Services can assist with academic advising, course selection, and more. There is an Indigenous Student Advisor with EAS who provides information about campus resources and academic planning.

SCHEDULE

Modules	Topics and Documents	Readings and Resources	Assignments/Activities
Week 1 September 7-10 Introduction to Technical Communication	Course outline/syllabus; Canvas site; principles of technical communication; purpose and audience	Text: Part 1 – Principles of Composition – Paragraphs (pages 3-16)	
Week 2 September 13-17 Professional Style Correspondence	Professional style Correspondence – emails and business letters	Article: Beyond Words: What's Missing in Online Connections by Dr. Daniel Goleman Text: Part 2 – Understanding Sentences and Types of Sentences (pages 64-82)	
Week 3 September 20-24 Persuasion and Proposals	Persuasive appeals Proposals	Text: Part 4 – Writing Effective Sentences – Basic Sentence Elements and Sentence Variety (pages 187-199)	
Week 4 September 27-October 1 Group Projects	Group project – teamwork and collaborative writing	Text: Part 4 – Writing Effective Sentences – Common Sentence Problems (pages 209-229)	Correspondence (5 marks)
Week 5 October 4-8 Group Projects	Proposals and research	Text: Part 5 – Punctuation (pages 233-254)	
Week 6 October 11-15 Readability and Informal Reports	Informal reports		Proposal (10 marks)
Week 7 October 18-22 Style and Technical Writing	Writing/editing strategies		

Week 8 October 25-29 Formal Reports	Formal reports and components		Midterm Exam (15 marks)
Week 9 November 1-5 Technical Description Definitions	Technical description and instructions Parenthetical, sentence and expanded definitions		Draft/Outline (10 marks)
Week 10 November 8-12 Presentations Ethics and Communication	Presentations and graphics Ethics and communication		Midterm Break
Week 11 November 15-19 Group Projects	Group presentations and formal reports		
Week 12 November 22-26 Group Projects	Group presentations and formal reports		
Week 13 November 29-December 3 Presentations	Group presentations in class		Presentation (10 marks)
Week 14 December 6-7 Formal Reports Review	Review for the final exam		Formal Report (15 marks) Final Exam (35 marks/see schedule)