

# CS/MATH-395, Technical Communications

Syllabus, Fall 2020

## Summary Information

Professor	Thomas C. Bressoud (Dr. B)
Office	Olin Hall 210
Email	bressoud@denison.edu
Class Hours	T: 11:30 a.m. to 1:20 p.m. US ET Olin 311 <a href="#">Zoom Class</a>
Office Hours	MWF: 8:30 a.m. to 9:20 a.m. TR: 2:50 p.m. to 3:40 p.m. <a href="#">Zoom Office Hours</a>
Final Exam	Final Talk instead of Final Exam
Course Page	<a href="https://notebookl.denison.edu">https://notebookl.denison.edu</a>
Weekly Schedule	<a href="#">CS/MATH-395 Weekly Schedule on Google Drive</a>
Credit Hours	1 — <i>This course adheres to Denison's Academic Credit Policy</i>

## COVID-19 Summary

- Primarily classes will be held in person and on campus.
  - Professor is planning on teaching in person, at least until such time that health and safety are an issue.
- All on-campus students are expected for in-person class sessions.
  - Students in quarantine, or those in isolation that are asymptomatic or able to manage will move to remote interaction until they are cleared.
- Class size is 16, with 6 students electing remote. Many remote students are at +12 hour time zone difference.
  - I will be reaching out to remote students to determine which are planning on being synchronous with the Tuesday sessions.
- All class sessions will involve all participating students using Zoom, and these Zoom sessions will be recorded to give students options for viewing asynchronously.
- Sessions will often use Zoom breakouts, and so we may need to be creative:
  - Students in the same breakout that are in-person may need to really move to a separate breakout room to avoid echoing.
  - Remote students that are synchronous are in the best position for breakouts.
  - Remote students that watch asynchronously may be required to self-schedule for an equivalent breakout amongst themselves.
- Participation will be a part of the grade, which can be satisfied, in part, by being part of the synchronous class sessions, or by checking in during office hours, or through asynchronous students recording and providing their post-class breakout session.

- Office hours will all be held via Zoom, whether students are on-campus or remote.
- To support remote students and the time zone difference, MWF office hours will be at 8:30 am US ET, with TR hours in the afternoon for on-campus students unwilling to be active at that time.
- With the revised academic schedule, the final talk will be remote and completed after Thanksgiving.
- Students will be expected to have their computing device *at every class* so that they can do Zoom and breakouts.
  - Also, always bring headphones to class so that we do not hear each others' breakout sessions.

## Learning Objectives

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The primary objective in this course is to develop the ability to communicate technical material effectively. Effective communication of technical material is really a form of *teaching*. This means that it must:

- be targeted appropriately for the *audience*,
- convince the audience of the worth of the subject,
- convey a balance of *breadth*, to enable understanding of the aspects and context of the technical subject, and *depth*, to enable understanding of the details involved in one or more of those aspects.

An additional objective of the course is to develop our ability to listen, understand, and assess the technical communication of others.

Developing both of these competencies takes *practice*. We learn by doing, and then reflecting on what was successful and what was less successful, and then repeating the process.

## Resources

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- [\*Creatively Speaking: Some Strategies for the Preparation and Delivery of Oral Presentations\*](#), **Speaking of Teaching**, The Center for Teaching and Learning, Stanford University, Vol. 18, No. 1.
- [\*Giving a Good Presentation\*](#), Joseph Gallian, University of Minnesota Duluth.
- [\*Technically Speaking\*](#), Lew Ludwig, NSF Grant #06322804.
- [\*If I understood you, would I have this look on my face? My adventures in the art and science of relating and communicating\*](#), Alan Alda, ISBN 978-0812989144, 2017, Mayflower Productions.

In addition, we will find and use other resources we discover through the course of the semester. ... there is no end to folks with advice on how to communicate ;-).

We will be using Notebowl, <https://notebowl.denison.edu>, for class discussion. Rather than emailing questions to the teaching staff, I encourage you to post your questions on Notebowl. If you email a question to me, I will respond by asking you to post your question to Notebowl. So you are more likely to get your answer more quickly by going to Notebowl straight away.

Deliverables with associated due dates and times can be found on Notebowl, as can this syllabus. Linked to from Notebowl Documents is our weekly schedule, placed on Google Drive, and you will refer to it often.

- [CS/MATH-395 Weekly Schedule on Google Drive](#)

## Coursework

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- **Participation:** This course will work best when we engage with one another and with the material. There will be many opportunities when we do breakout sessions and when we look for and assess recorded technical communication by others. The course is successful when we all do our part in engaged participation and is unsuccessful when we seek doing the least we can do, or procrastinate and do a half-xxxx'd job at the last minute.

- **Assessing Communication:** An overarching objective of this course is for us to get better at listening, watching, and learning from technical presentations and to, in a constructive way, assess and critique that communication. We will have numerous opportunities to do this:
  - external technical presentations, like Igitel! or YouTube,
  - other students' presentations, often in breakout sessions,
  - viewing and critiquing our own talks and presentations.
- **Talks we Give:** There will be a number of talks expected over the semester across a number of dimensions:
  - some will be recorded, and some will be live
  - there will be both individual and paired talks
  - many/most will be short (2-5 minutes), but the final talk will be a longer (on the order of 10 minutes).

For at least the paired talks and for the individual long talk, there will be an initial talk, self and classmate assessment, and then a repeated version of the talk.

- **Departmental Talks:** We are hiring CS faculty this year. As part of the process, the finalist candidates are expected to give a research talk and to teach a section of one of our classes. These talks differ in audience as well as the likely strategies for effective technical communication, and so we will watch these talks followed by critique and constructive reflection. Grade-wise, this will fall under the "Assessment of Others" category.

## Grade Determination

Category	Weight
Engaged Participation	15%
Assessment of Others; Rubric Generation	20%
Individual Short Talks	15%
Paired Talks, Initial and Repeated, Self Assessment	25%
Individual Long Talk, Initial and Repeated, Self Assessment	25%

## Policies

### Academic Integrity

Proposed and developed by Denison students, passed unanimously by DCGA and Denison's faculty, the Code of Academic Integrity requires that instructors notify the Associate Provost of cases of academic dishonesty. Cases are typically heard by the Academic Integrity Board which determines whether a violation has occurred, and, if so, its severity and the sanctions. In some circumstances the case may be handled through an Administrative Resolution Procedure. Further, the code makes students responsible for promoting a culture of integrity on campus and acting in instances in which integrity is violated.

Academic honesty, the cornerstone of teaching and learning, lays the foundation for lifelong integrity. Academic dishonesty is intellectual theft. It includes, but is not limited to, providing or receiving assistance in a manner not authorized by the instructor in the creation of work to be submitted for evaluation. This standard applies to all work. Students must clearly cite any sources consulted—not only for quoted phrases but also for ideas and information that are not common knowledge. Neither ignorance nor carelessness is an acceptable defense in cases of plagiarism. It is the student's responsibility to follow the appropriate format for citations, even in presentations. Students should ask their instructors for assistance in determining what sorts of materials and assistance are appropriate for assignments and for

guidance in citing such materials clearly. For further information about the Code of Academic Integrity, see <http://denison.edu/academics/curriculum/integrity>.

**Students found responsible for breaches of academic integrity will earn a failing grade for the course and may receive even more severe consequences, per University policy**

## Attendance and Participation Policy and Responsibility

I expect a high level of participation by all the students in this class. True learning requires an active role and regular attendance in order to engage and master the material. Thus, I expect your attendance at every class meeting, or by watching the Zoom and then checking in during office hours. There is the 15% participation and in-class activity part of the grade that I will use to assess participation during class.

You are responsible for all reading assignments, whether or not the material is also covered during class time, as well as for announcements and decisions made relative to coursework that may occur during classtime. If you miss class, it is *your responsibility* to get notes and information on the material that was conveyed during any class you might miss.

## Accommodations

Students with a documented disability who wish to request reasonable academic accommodations based on the impact of a disability should complete a Request for Academic Accommodations/Faculty Notification form with the Academic Resource Center (ARC) located in 020 Higley Hall and contact me privately as soon as possible to discuss specific needs and arrangements. I rely on the Academic Resource Center (ARC) to verify the need for reasonable accommodations based on the documentation on file in that office. Reasonable accommodations cannot be applied retroactively and therefore ideally should be enacted early in the semester as they are not automatically carried forward from a previous term and must be requested every semester.

## Appropriate Use of Course Materials

As an institution which strives to inspire and educate our students to become discerning moral agents and active citizens of a democratic society, we are committed to complying with all laws regarding copyright throughout the University. This syllabus and all course materials used in this course may be copyrighted and accordingly will be governed by the provisions of the U.S. copyright law (for an overview see <http://copyright.gov/circs/circ01.pdf> and for fair use guidelines see <http://copyright.gov/fair-use/more-info.html>). In particular, posting any course materials on commercial sites or creating a bank of materials for distribution to other students may be considered a violation of the University's Code of Academic Integrity as well as a breach of copyright law. If you have any questions about these guidelines, please speak with your instructor.

## Reporting Sexual Assault

Project write-ups, and other coursework submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees are required by University policy and Title IX guidance to report allegations of discrimination based on sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation, including sexual misconduct, sexual assault and suspected abuse/neglect of a minor, occurring on campus and / or involving current students at Denison University when they become aware of possible incidents in the course of their employment, including via coursework or advising conversations. There are others on campus to whom you may speak in confidence, including counselors at the Whisler Center for Student Wellness, and clergy. More information on Title IX and University policy guidance on gender identity / expression bias and sexual misconduct / assault, including support resources, how to report, and prevention and education efforts, can be found at [denison.edu/titleix](http://denison.edu/titleix); students may also contact Steve Gauger, Campus Title IX Coordinator, in Doane Administration 001, by email at [gaugers@denison.edu](mailto:gaugers@denison.edu), or by phone at 740-587-8660.