COMMUNICATION IN MATH & CS
ENGL 119-006: T/Th 10:00am to 11:20am in EV3 3408
ENGL 119-005: T/Th 11:30am to 12:50pm in EV3 3408

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OFFICE HOURS: Wednesdays 4-5pm & Thursdays 2-4pm and by appointment
OFFICE LOCATION: 144 HH

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Course Description

This course aims to help Math and Computer Science students communicate clearly and effectively in academic and professional environments. Assignments and activities in this course cover a range of typical workplace communication tasks pertaining to written, oral, and collaborative work.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Recognize and apply the conventions for common workplace documents.
- Create documents that demonstrates principles of readability and plain language.
- Apply a rhetorical framework to approaching various communication tasks.
- Conduct and incorporate research effectively.
- Work effectively in groups.
- Deliver effective oral presentations.

Course Requirements & Evaluation

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**Participation (10%)**

Earning full marks for participation is relatively easy, but it requires more than just showing up. Excellent participation is demonstrated when you:

- Arrive on time (and you don’t leave early).
- Have done the readings before class and are prepared to discuss them
- Find something thoughtful and relevant to say in every class.
- Encourage a positive class environment.
- Avoid distracting behaviour.
- Demonstrate good effort when completing in-class activities.

**Memo (10%)**

For this assignment, you will practice the basics of routine correspondence and effective messages by composing a 1-2pg memo. The details of the memo will be outlined in the assignment guideline document.

**Job Application Package (15%)**

For this assignment, you will prepare a cover letter (1pg) and resume (1-2pg) for a specific job posting that you are qualified for. Although the particular requirements of this genre might vary by profession, this assignment will develop your ability to write persuasive, audience-specific messages.
Usability Testing Report (25%)

Usability testing refers to the process of testing out a product (e.g. website, app, set of instructions, piece of equipment/software etc.) on a representative user in order to improve the user experience of the product.

Working in groups, you will conduct a usability test and, based on the data collected, create a formal report on your results.

Quiz (15%)

The purpose of the quiz is to ensure you are reading the course material, retaining core principles, and applying concepts appropriately. The quiz will be based on material we cover in class.

Proposal (15%)

Proposals outline a well-defined problem along with an informed, feasible, and persuasive solution(s). For this assignment, you will prepare a 2-3pg technical report on a problem you’ve identified related to the field of Mathematics and CS. This proposal is research-based and should incorporate at least three credible sources.

Oral Presentation (10%)

In a 3-4-minute presentation, you will summarize and distill your written proposal for the class. This requirement develops your ability to translate information to a different communication mode and for a different audience, as well as provides a low-stake opportunity to practice your presentation skills.
Grading Scale

“A” work (83-100%) is earned when student produces work that is creative, original, and exceeds expectations. Writing is compelling, persuasive, and mostly error-free. Student frequently advances class discussion through thoughtful, substantive insights grounded in a strong understanding of the material; student fosters a positive classroom environment that encourages peer engagement.

“B” work (72-82%) is earned when student produces work that is good and meets expectations. Student consistently applies techniques and principles introduced in class. Writing in this category may take a more conventional approach which at times engages the reader but rarely offers new or in-depth insight; few errors do not undermine the overall integrity of the work. Student regularly contributes to class discussion and fosters a positive classroom environment.

“C” work (62-71%) is earned when student produces work that is adequate. Writing meets minimal expectations. Writing tends to be underdeveloped and confusing; writing indicates little effort to apply techniques and principles introduced in class; a moderate number of errors undermine the overall integrity and/or comprehension of the work. Student participates infrequently and may frequently come to class unprepared.

“D” or “F” work (0-61%) is earned when student produces work that does not meet minimal expectations. Writing shows little to no effort to apply strategies and principles introduced in class; writing is mostly unclear and confusing; a frequent number of errors undermine the overall comprehension of the work. Student never/rarely contributes to class discussion, often comes to class unprepared, and may foster a distracting classroom environment on a regular basis.

Submitting Assignments

All assignments must be submitted as a hard copy in class and on LEARN dropbox. Do not slide any work under my office door unless you have permission to do so. You may submit assignments electronically until midnight of the due date. However, you must still submit a hard copy by the next class.

Please ensure your assignments meet the following requirements:

- Time New Roman (or something similar like Arial). 11 or 12 pt.
- 1” margins
- Include page numbers

Policy for Late Assignments & Attendance

Assignments submitted after the midnight of the due date will result in a 2% per day penalty.

Exceptions and/or extensions may be requested if there is a medical issue for which you have a doctor’s note. All other circumstances will be evaluated on a case by case basis. Please note, there is no guarantee that your situation will warrant an accommodation. Prompt communication in advance of an absence demonstrates professional courtesy and good sense. However, prior notification does not ensure that your absence, tardiness, or late work will be excused.
Electronic Device Policy

Students may use electronic devices (laptops, tablets, phones etc.) for class-related activities only (i.e. note-taking, group projects, conducting research, LEARN etc.). Electronic devices used for any other purpose is rude, distracting and simply not permitted. The instructor reserves the right to request electronic communication to be turned off and put away at any time. Repeat instances of inappropriate use of electronics in the classroom will negatively affect your participation grade.

Recording or photographing any part of a classroom lecture/activity is not permitted unless you’ve been given special permission. All power point slides will be available on LEARN.

Email

Important announcements and course information will sometimes be sent via email or posted on LEARN. It is the students’ responsibility to ensure that they are checking their email and LEARN site frequently for such information.

I aim to answer all email inquiries within 24hrs on a weekday and 48hrs on the weekend; please plan your email queries accordingly.

Learning Accommodations

If there are any accessibility concerns or accommodation requests you might have, please speak with me at the beginning of the term or whenever you become aware your needs.

For more formal arrangements, and access to a range of other services, contact the AccessAbility Services office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall (NH 1401, ph. 519-888-4567 ext. 35082). AccessAbility Services collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term. For more information visit their website at https://uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/

Academic Integrity

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the UWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage and the Arts Academic Integrity webpage for more information.

A note about plagiarism. According to UWaterloo policy definitions, plagiarism is presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others (whether attributed or anonymous) as one’s own in any work submitted whether or not for grading purposes.

Plagiarism includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without
Proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include, but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, material on the internet, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, and computer code/software.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- Using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment
- Using another’s data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement
- Submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one’s own
- Failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks
- Submitting a take--home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else
- Failing to cite oneself when permission has been given to make use of one’s earlier work

**Discipline**

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline. For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties (https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/guidelines/guidelines-assessment-penalties).

**Grievance**

A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4 (https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.
Appeals

A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71, Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72, Student Appeals (https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72).

The Writing and Communication Centre

The Writing and Communication Centre works with students as they develop, draft, and revise their ideas. Writing and communication specialists offer one-on-one support in planning assignments, synthesizing and citing research, organizing papers and reports, designing presentations and e-portfolios, and revising for clarity and coherence.

You can make multiple appointments throughout the term, or drop in at the Library for quick questions or feedback. To book a 50-minute appointment and to see drop-in hours, visit www.uwaterloo.ca/writing-and-communication-centre. Group appointments for team-based projects, presentations, and papers are also available.

Please note that communication specialists guide you to see your work as readers would. They can teach you revising skills and strategies, but will not change or correct your work for you. Please bring hard copies of your assignment instructions and any notes or drafts to your appointment.

Counselling Services

From transition to university life, to changes in expectations, to relationships, there are a lot of reasons you might seek help for your mental health. 1 in 5 Canadians experience a mental health concern in their lifetime. You are not alone.

Counselling Services offers a variety of confidential services at no charge to University of Waterloo students who are currently registered or are on a co-op term. Mental health professionals are here for you and interested in helping you through whatever you are experiencing. Their regular hours are Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m; they are located in Needles Hall Addition on the 2nd Floor. Our phone number is 519-888-4567 ext. 32655.

Individual appointments: Emergency appointments are available during our regular hours and are provided to any student who is at immediate risk of self harm or harming someone else, or has recently experienced a trauma. Regular booked appointments can be made and scheduling depends on the urgency of your needs. When you meet with a counsellor they will listen to your concerns and develop a plan that suits your individual situation and needs. Walk-in appointments are available each Wednesday and Thursday between 11:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. These appointments are 90-minutes in length and are focused on finding you practical solutions for your most pressing concern.

Coping Skills seminars: Coping Skills seminars are 1-hour seminars that focus on cultivating resilience, challenging thinking, managing emotions, and changing behaviour. They are offered a variety of times per term and can be registered for on LEADS. You can also view them online.
More information about all of our services can be found at: https://uwaterloo.ca/campus-wellness

**Student Success Office**

The Student Success Office provides a range of academic and personal development services, resources for international students, as well as study abroad and exchange support. They work closely with campus partners to create a vibrant experience for students from their first days at Waterloo, right to convocation. The SSO is located in South Campus Hall, second floor. Office hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.; and Tuesday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Their services include:

- **Academic Skill Building Workshops**: Register for an activity based workshop to learn how to take better notes, improve your time management skills or explore new study strategies.

- **Success Coaching**: Connect with a success coach and book a one-on-one appointment to explore new learning strategies and resources that you can use to achieve your academic goals.

- **Student Leadership Development**: Explore and enhance your leadership abilities in this series of workshops. Complete all 12 before convocation to receive an e-certificate signed by the University president and associate provost, students.

- **International Student Advising**: An experienced and dedicated team of advisors are happy to assist you during your time at the University of Waterloo. All of our International Student Advisors are Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultants with the Immigration Consultants of Canada Regulatory Council. All consultations with the International Student Advisors are confidential.