English 409  
Writing for Special Purposes  
Winter 1993

Instructor: C. Schryer  
Office: HH 222  Office Hrs: Fri. 9:30-12:30 or by appt.  
Extension: 3318  
Email: cschryer@watarts  
Location: Section 1 Tues  
Section 2 Thurs

Course Description: This course assumes that graduating students need a wide range of composing, revision and editing experiences characteristic of different discourse communities. This year the course focuses on three types of such communities: technical communication, advertising, and journalism. Most importantly, this course is based on the premise that communicators need not only certain skills but access to theoretical frameworks that will assist them in analyzing the discourse practices of various discourse communities. Consequently, the course will explore various theoretical frameworks in order to illuminate discursive practices.

Course Objectives: After completing this course students should have:

1. experience in analyzing the genres and contexts of various discourse communities
2. several linguistic and rhetorical theoretical frameworks for exploring the reader–writer relationship as they pertain to professional writing
3. an appreciation of the social contexts within which documents are produced
4. the ability to analyze, write, revise and edit a variety of different types of documents such as reports, advertisements, editorials, and newsreports
5. the ability to function effectively as a member of a research and writing team.

Course Organization: This course consists of lectures, discussions, and most importantly workshops. The class will be divided into two groups. One group will meet with me on Tuesday and the other on Thursday. On the day that a group is not meeting with me, they will meet out of class as members of a research and writing team. All of the assignments (except the Final Exam) require group research, revision and editing.

The work for this course has been divided into two parts. This in-class work will focus on discussion and workshops needed to acquire both theoretical perspectives and practical skills. The out-of-class work will consist of application of those skills and exploration of the theoretical frameworks.
Course Policies:
1. Each 3 hour class is equivalent to a week's lecture in a regular credit course. Therefore attendance is mandatory at both the in- and out-of-class workshops. Group work depends on everyone's contribution. Any student who cannot attend a group meeting (for some very valid reason) must inform the other group members. Any student who misses more than one such meeting will need to explain his or absence to the instructor.

2. All assignments must be word-processed or at least typed; untyped manuscripts will be returned ungraded.

3. All assignments must be submitted on time. Late papers will be penalized - 10% for every day late.

4. The in-class workshops assume that students will have done the assigned readings prior to class.

Group Policies:
1. Groups may meet wherever they wish, as long as they are not disturbing other people.
2. Group conflicts must first be resolved by the group leader and by reference to the group contract. If the conflict is still not resolved, members can enlist the aid of the instructor.
3. During each class period, group members could be called on to report on the status of their group project.
4. After each unit, each student will appraise the performance of his or her group as a whole. These evaluations form part of the professionalism grade.

Course Mark Breakdown
1. Professionalism 10%
   An assessment that I make based on each student's various group evaluations and contribution to the class.

2. Assignment One - Technical Communication - 20%

3. Assignment Two - Advertising - 25%

4. Assignment Three - Journalism - 25%

5. Final Exam - 20%

Texts:


Study Schedule - Winter 1993

Week 1
Jan 4-8
Course and First Assignment Description
Groups Established.
Invention (Chapt. 2. of Dragga and Gong)
Task: Read Chapt 2.
Workshop: Select Discourse Community
Do reader assessment

Week 2. Jan 11-15
Arrangement in Technical Documentation
Group Reports
Task: Read Chapt 3.
Workshop: Do arrangement inventory.

Week 3. Jan 18-22
Style in Technical Documentation
Group Reports
Task: Read Chapt 4.
Workshop: Do stylistic assessment.

Week 4. Jan 25-29
Delivery in Technical Documentation
Task: Read Chapt 5.
Workshop: Do a delivery inventory.
Draft Report to Editing partner three days after workshop.

Week 5. Feb. 1-5
Advertising- Verbal and Visual Messages
Task: Read V and S Chpts 1 and 2
Workshop: Select set of ads
Do a verbal and visual analysis
Copy edit report

Week 6. Feb. 8-12
Advertising--Structure
Task: Read Chapt 3.
Workshop: Do a structural analysis
Final report (all elements) due Monday, February 8.

Week 7. 15 Undergraduate Study Week. Class cancelled.

Week 8. Feb. 22-26
Advertising--Strategies of Address
Task: Read Chapt 4.
Workshop: Do strategic analysis
Start preparing for in-class presentation

Week 9. Mar. 1-5
Advertising--Ideology
Read Chaps 5 and 6
Do ideological analysis
Construct your own ad
Draft Analysis to Editing partner three days after workshop.

Week 10.  Mar. 8-12
In-class advertising presentations
Task: 
Read Fowler Chaps 1-3
Workshop: Select a News Source
Copy edit analysis

Week 11.  Mar. 15-19
News analysis
Task: 
Read Fowler Chaps 4 and 5
Workshop: Analyze News Source
Final ad analysis due Monday March 15.

Week 12.  Mar. 22
News analysis
Task: 
Read Chaps 6-8
Workshop: Analyze News Source
Start preparing journal article

Week 13.  Mar 29
News analysis
Task: 
Read Chaps 9-12
In-class workshop re news analysis
Draft article and analysis to Editing partner three days after class
Copy edited by Friday, April 9.
Final due Monday, April 12.
English 409
Assignment One 20%
Technical Documents

Preparation: In groups, locate a set of technical documents characteristic of a certain organization or discourse community. Software manuals or technical specifications or on-line documentation are examples of such products.

In your lab class analyze your documents for the following:

1. A reader assessment (Dragga and Gong, p.57)
2. An arrangement inventory (p.64)
3. A stylistic assessment with style guide (p. 102, 107, 109)

Assignment: The assignment itself will consist of the following three elements:

1. A report (7-9 pages) relating the organizational, stylistic, and delivery features of your documents to the "invoked" audience. Both the first and copy edited versions of this report should also be handed in.

2. A report (1-3 pages) commenting on your substantive edit and copy edit of another group member's reports. A copy of this report should also be sent to the writer you worked with.

3. A brief comment on your experience of working with your editor.
Preparation: In groups, locate an advertising campaign or sequence of ads. (Nike or Oxo, for example). Try to locate a set of ads which has existed for a period of time and has appeared in different contexts (i.e. different magazines).

In your labs, analyze your set of ads for the following elements:

1. verbal and visual messages (Vestergaard and Schroder, Chapt.2)
2. structure (Chapt. 3)
3. strategies of address (Chapt. 4)
4. ideology (Chapts. 5 and 6)

Based on your analysis design a "new" ad in the series for a specific context.

Assignment: The assignment itself will consist of the following 4 elements:

1. A group oral presentation of your ad with a justification of the techniques you used.

2. A written analysis (7-9 pages) of the ad. Be sure to justify your design decisions based on Vestergaard and Schroder. Both the first and copy edited versions of this analysis should also be handed in.

3. A report (1-3 pages) commenting on your substantive edit and copy edit of another group member's reports. A copy of this report should also be sent to the writer you worked with.

4. A brief comment on your experience of working with your editor.