

IDC 6060: International Technical Communication Fall 2008

Dr. Carol Barnum

Office: J349, Campus Office Hours: Thursdays, 1 PM – 5 PM; also online inside WebCT and by appointment

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REVISED July 2008

Print this syllabus and refer to it often

Course Description (from the catalog)

Survey of the major issues that affect technical communication from a global perspective. Topics may include cultural influences on communication, challenges associated with technical translation, differing uses of graphics, communicating within multinational organizations, and theoretical issues related to international communication.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to immerse you in the issues affecting communication products intended for international markets. Students will gain an understanding of issues affecting localization, internationalization, and globalization of communication products. Rhetorical and cultural concepts will be addressed through reading about theory and practice in the text book and relevant articles and resources.

You should think of this course as a graduate seminar, taught online. Therefore, your participation is vital to your success and the success of the course for all.

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Methods
Understand how cultural factors affect the communication process	Readings and discussion; analysis of letters and websites
Demonstrate awareness of one's own lens of cultural and its impact on world view	Readings and discussion; analysis of information products in other cultures
Interpret the cultural messages contained in communication situations in various media	Study of case problems, discussion; creation of a case study employing learning from reading and discussion

Class Activities

Weekly activities will focus on readings and lively discussion among students. Each week begins on a Monday and ends on the following Sunday evening. Be prepared for full participation in discussion by reading the required material *before* the discussion begins and by participating cogently and frequently during the week.

Text

Required:

Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind (2005). Hofstede, G. & Hofstede, G.J. New York: McGraw Hill. ISBN: 0-07-143959-5

Recommended:

Guide to Cross-Cultural Communication (2004). Reynolds, S. & Valentine, D. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall. ISBN: 0-13-049784-3

WebCT (Vista) Course Tool

As with all of our online courses in the program, the course tool is WebCT Vista. You should already have a user name and password (your spsu user name and Banner

login). After successful log in and before accessing our course, run the browser check to confirm that you have the proper settings on *any computer* you will use to access the course.

If you experience any technical difficulties at any time during the semester, contact WebCT Vista's Online Support Center at www.help.view.usg.edu, where you can access information through the knowledge base or live technical support. If the Online Support Center cannot solve your issue, it will be escalated to your local Vista administrator so that SPSU can troubleshoot the problem for you.

Office Hours and Email

Although this is a fully online course, if it is convenient for you, you may want to come to see me during office hours or by making an appointment. For many of you, however, it won't be convenient or even possible to meet in person; however, we can schedule a meeting in Live Classroom, as needed, or, if the class wants to designate a mutually convenient time for virtual office hours, I can set up a time each week to be available.

Use email inside the course for communication directly with me. Use email only for topics/questions/comments that are private. Most questions/comments are more appropriately posed to the class via one of the discussion topics or "open topics."

Please do not use my SPSU email (cbarnum@spsu.edu) except for those issues that are so time-sensitive that they require my immediate attention.

Discussion

Plan on accessing the course *at least* several times during each week, preferably every day. When online, allow sufficient time to participate fully in online discussions and activities, which normally begin on a Monday and end on the following Sunday evening.

Before you post to discussion, be sure to read the postings of all others first so that you avoid repetition and also reflect on the postings of others. Check back during the week to read and respond to new postings by others. Do not wait until the end of a discussion topic to begin posting. The frequency, quality, and distribution of your postings over the discussion period is an essential element in your success in this course. Consult the discussion grading rubric for more information about how grades will be assigned for discussions.

For **discussions**, the following rubric will be used.

Grade	Interpretation
Excellent (A)	The posting is accurate, original, relevant, thought-provoking, and well written (it is proofread for spelling/typos). When other postings are present, the student shows evidence of having read and absorbed the postings of the others. The student posts <i>frequently</i> , over a period of days, to interact with the postings of others and contribute to the ongoing discussion.
Above Average (B)	The postings lack at least one of the above qualities, but the postings are above average quality. The postings make a significant contribution to our understanding of the issue being discussed. The student may have posted frequently, but perhaps most or all in close proximity, thereby not spreading out the postings.
Average (C)	The postings lack two or three of the required qualities. Comments merely based on personal opinion fall in this category. Little or no reflection on the postings of others also falls in this category. Although there may be several postings,

	they all occur within one day/night.
Below Average (D)	The posting(s) present no new information. One point may contribute to the collegial/community atmosphere; there may be only one or perhaps two minimal postings.
Unacceptable (F)	The posting—a single comment—adds nothing worthwhile to the discussion.
No credit (0)	The student does not participate in the discussion or the post(s) are submitted after the cutoff date/time for the topic.

For any topics not covered by official discussion topics, you can create a new topic of interest by using the “**Open Topics**” discussion area.

A discussion area called “**Community Forum**” is for topics outside the particular focus of this course (but these can be very enjoyable and can help us build community).

Library Access

Distance learning students at SPSU have access to library services and resources equivalent to on-campus students. A library barcode is not required. To connect to the library resources, use **Hornet Connect** <http://connect.spsu.edu>

Then log in using your SPSU email username and password at https://connect.spsu.edu/dana-na/auth/url_default/welcome.cgi.

GIL Express is available to distance learning students using your SPSU ID. You can request your SPSU ID by using Banner Web; or, by calling the SPSU University Police/ID Department at (678) 915-7348.

With GIL Express, you can check out books through two options:

- Walk-in service at any University System of Georgia library or
- Online by making a request using GIL Express. Books may be picked up at and returned to any USG library.

Reference questions may be directed to the Reference Desk (toll-free): 1-866-513-9516.

Technology Needs

You will be expected to have high speed internet access.

You will be expected to be able to use Microsoft Word and PowerPoint. You will also be expected to post assignments as Word or PowerPoint files or as PDF documents (especially if you are working in software other than Microsoft Office). If you do not have Adobe software for saving documents as PDF files, you can download a free PDF creator from PDF995.com (or other similar freeware options available from the internet).

For any technical questions for which you can get help from your classmates, use the discussion topic labeled “**Technical Forum.**”

You can also access our technical support via <http://eu.spsu.edu/distancelearning>
Then click on the technical support link.

Assignments

The assignments are briefly described here. Please refer to the Assignments module(s) for more information about the assignments. Also refer to the calendar for due dates for assignments.

Assignment	Weight	Description of Assignment
Weekly discussions (graded in 3 or more segments throughout the semester)	25%	See the discussion grading rubric for the basis for discussion grades. Regular, active participation is expected for all weekly discussion topics. Discussions are based on the readings posted to the course, along with the text book assigned readings. Grades will be posted in 3 or more segments throughout the semester. The final discussion grade for this assignment is the average of all the individual grades.
Midterm case problem	15%	Analysis of a international communication problem
Website redesign/analysis	25%	Redesign of a website for a particular international audience with analysis of the issues addressed and the basis for the redesign decisions
Team Case Study	30%	Teams create a case study for use as a class activity;
	5%	Lead the activity, report on the issues addressed

Grades

A = 90—100

B = 80—89

C = 70—79

D = 60—69

F = anything below 60 (for grade calculation purposes an F = 50 points, unless otherwise stated)

0 = work not submitted when due and not approved for late submission (also any work that exhibits evidence of plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty)

Notes:

1. If your final grade at the end of the term is on the borderline between grades, I will determine your grade based on my assessment of your level of participation and general progress.
2. The SPSU Graduate Programs Committee and Faculty have approved a policy that does not allow graduate students to receive a grade of D in a course. If your average for all assignments at the end of the semester is below 70, your grade will be recorded as an F.
3. Any student in the IDC program (or technical communication certificates) receiving a grade in a course below a **B** must repeat the course or, for an elective course such as this one, take another elective to receive credit toward graduation.

Late/Missed Assignments

Due dates for assignment are posted to the calendar and listed with the assignment drop box. To be received on time, your assignment must be posted to the assignment drop box *before the time expires for the assignment* (usually 6 PM).

In case you have technical difficulty or run into other problems causing your assignment to miss the deadline, there is a small window to post after the deadline (usually up to 11 PM on the due date.) Although an assignment will be marked “late” if it is posted in this extended window, it will not be counted as late by me. You can also take back your assignment during this period, if, for instance, you discover that you have posted the wrong version.

However, any assignment that is not posted when due and within this extended window, will, in fact, be missed and will not be accepted, unless you request and *receive* permission to submit it separately after the due date. A request does not result in an automatic acceptance, as the expectation is that work will be submitted on or before the due date.

If permission is granted to submit an assignment late, you may lose a letter grade for missing the deadline.

Students with Disabilities

If you believe that you may need accommodations in this class, please contact the counselor working with disabilities at 678-915-7361 as soon as possible to ensure that appropriate accommodations are made.

Expectations for Graduate Academic Work (approved by IDC graduate faculty)

Graduate students are expected to exhibit professionalism through their actions and attitude, as indicated by the following:

- Active participation in class
- Meeting deadlines
- Communicating and interacting appropriately with instructor
- Communicating and interacting appropriately with other students
- Exhibiting intellectual interest and curiosity
- Engaging in discussion and contemplation of ideas