CMPT 376W - D100 Tech. Writing and Group Dynamic

Instructor(s): Milan Tofiloski

Calendar Objective/Description:
Tech. Writing and Group Dynamic

Instructor's Objectives:
This course will introduce students to a range of writing processes and styles. It will emphasize writing to understand disorganized ideas more clearly, writing to persuade others, and writing to draw conclusions. The course will include both informal and formal writing approaches. Assignments will generally have an initial draft, then a finished draft. This is a W course.

Written work for this course will be submitted via Turnitin, a third-party service licensed for use by SFU. Turnitin is used for originality checking to help detect plagiarism. Students will be required to create an account with Turnitin, and to submit their work via that account, on the terms stipulated in the agreement between the student and Turnitin. This agreement includes the retention of your submitted work as part of the Turnitin database. Any student with a concern about using the Turnitin service may opt to use an anonymous identity in their interactions with Turnitin. Students who do not intend to use Turnitin in the standard manner must notify the instructor at least two weeks in advance of any submission deadline. In particular, it is the responsibility of any student using the anonymous option (i.e. false name and temporary e-mail address created for the purpose) to inform the instructor such that the instructor can match up the anonymous identity with the student.

Prerequisites:
see go.sfu.ca

Topics:
- Informal writing to generate material
- Drafting and revising
- Types of technical documents (genres): Explanations, recommendations, emails, and others
- Clarity of sentence structure
- Style and voice
- Arguing from performance data
- Rhetorical situation: Audience, message, author, and context
- Improve critical thinking through numerous examples of effective and ineffective writing
- Identify when writing employs rhetorical persuasion, hyperbole, ad hominem attacks, propaganda, etc
- Distinguish between good and bad writing (i.e., “debugging”)  
- Convey effective writing is achieved primarily through editing and rewriting
- Articulate reasons that explain why and how a writing sample is ineffective
- Familiarity with writing guidelines, conventions, etiquette, and resolve contradictions & inconsistence
- Familiarity with the technical document creation process:
  - Rough draft/prototype, iterative drafts & “final” draft
  - Familiarity with the spectrum of technical document types (resumes, emails, documentation, proposals)
  - Understand the importance of living documents within Computing Science
  - Familiarity with linters and software tools for technical writing
- Understanding the audience
- Avoiding bias and conflicts of (personal) interest, how to be objective, gaining the reader’s trust
- How to target and write for an audience (technical and non-technical audiences)
- Group & collaborative writing through peer reviews
- Ability to write quickly
- Edit real-world documentation (e.g., on GitHub, Stack Overflow, etc.)

Grading:
To be discussed the first week of classes

Students must attain an overall passing grade on the weighted average of exams in the course in order to obtain a clear pass (C- or better).

Required Books:

Academic Honesty Statement:
Academic honesty plays a key role in our efforts to maintain a high standard of academic excellence and integrity. Students are advised that all acts of intellectual dishonesty will be handled in accordance with the SFU Academic Honesty and Student Conduct Policies (http://www.sfu.ca/policies/gazette/student.html).