OFFICIAL COURSE OUTLINE INFORMATION

Students are advised to keep course outlines in personal files for future use.

Shaded headings are subject to change at the discretion of the department – see course syllabus available from instructor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CMNS 390</th>
<th>Communications</th>
<th>3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COURSE NAME/NUMBER</td>
<td>FACULTY/DEPARTMENT</td>
<td>UCFV CREDITS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designing End-User and Technical Documentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>COURSE DESCRIPTIVE TITLE</td>
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**CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:**

Effective technical and end-user documentation, both print and online, requires consideration of several key factors (e.g., users’ specific needs, information gathering and research, design). The focus of this course is on structuring and designing documentation with the needs of the end users in mind. Students will learn about and apply the process for effective documentation to a number of exercises and to a term project of a document for a specific group (e.g., help centre sites, policy and procedures manuals or sites).

**PREREQUISITES:** 45 lower-level credits including CMNS 251.

For CIS program students, CIS 285 is recommended.

**SYNONYMOUS COURSE(S):**

(a) Replaces:  
(b) Cross-listed with:  
(c) Cannot take:  for further credit.

**TOTAL HOURS PER TERM: 45**

**TRAINING DAY-BASED INSTRUCTION:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Lectures: 15 Hrs</th>
<th>Seminar: 15 Hrs</th>
<th>Laboratory: 15 Hrs</th>
<th>Field experience: Hrs</th>
<th>Student directed learning: Hrs</th>
<th>Other (specify): Hrs</th>
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**MAXIMUM ENROLMENT: 25**

**EXPECTED FREQUENCY OF COURSE OFFERINGS:** Once a year

(every semester, annually, every other year, etc.)

**WILL TRANSFER CREDIT BE REQUESTED? (lower-level courses only)**  
☐ Yes  ☐ No

**WILL TRANSFER CREDIT BE REQUESTED? (upper-level requested by department)**  
☒ Yes  ☐ No

**TRANSFER CREDIT EXISTS IN BCCAT TRANSFER GUIDE:**  
☐ Yes  ☐ No

**WILL TRANSFER CREDIT BE REQUESTED? (upper-level requested by department)**  
☐ Yes  ☐ No

**SERVICE COURSE TO:**

(department/program)

CIS

**Course designer(s): Ken Fernstrom**  
**Department Head: Lynn Kirkland Harvey**  
**Supporting area consultation (UPACA1):**  
**Curriculum Committee chair: Moira Kloster**  
**Dean/Associate VP: Eric Davis**  
**Undergraduate Program Advisory Committee (UPAC) approval**

Date approved: Mar. 14, 2008  
Date: Mar. 28, 2008  
Date approved: June 6, 2008  
Date approved: June 6, 2008  
Date: Aug. 25, 2008
LEARNING OUTCOMES:
At the end of the course students will be able to
• create effective technical documentation for a specific audience.
• determine end-users’ needs.
• apply end-users’ needs to selection of content and design.
• apply documenting procedures.
• apply the principles of structured documentation for online and print documents.
• apply the principles of document design for both print and electronic documents.
• demonstrate the principles of and considerations required for document production.
• function effectively as a member of a writing team.

METHODS: (Guest lecturers, presentations, online instruction, field trips, etc.)
Lectures, seminars, group work.

METHODS OF OBTAINING PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT RECOGNITION (PLAR):
☐ Examination(s) ☑ Portfolio assessment ☐ Interview(s)

☐ Other (specify):

☐ PLAR cannot be awarded for this course for the following reason(s):

TEXTBOOKS, REFERENCES, MATERIALS:
[Textbook selection varies by instructor. An example of texts for this course might be:]

SUPPLIES / MATERIALS:

STUDENT EVALUATION:
[An example of student evaluation for this course might be:]
Term project proposal including audience analysis, time line, information requirements and research plan, outline of content 20%
Draft of materials 5%
Design considerations and plan 10%
Analysis of production considerations 10%
Analysis reports of team members’ work (4–5) 5%
Summary report on term project 5%
Presentation of summary report and term project 10%
Term project (online or print) 35%
COURSE CONTENT:

[Course content varies by instructor. An example of course content might be:]

Unit 1 (week 1)

Unit 2 (week 2)
Function and purpose of technical/end-user documentation. The importance of research. Project planning. Term project selection. Standards of professionalism and working with/reporting to clients. Guidelines for working in groups: teamwork and problem solving.

Unit 3 (weeks 3–4)
Document systems analysis and design process; effective and accurate requirements analysis. Defining end user needs; interviewing skills/verbal, asking questions, evaluating answers; determining knowledge base.

Unit 4 (week 5)
Gathering information; documenting procedures.

Unit 5 (weeks 6–8)
Structured documentation; selection and construction of content. Giving directions; writing instructions.

Unit 6 (weeks 9–10)
Format and design principles and considerations. The use of graphics and text. Designing dynamic online documentation. Form design. Usability testing.

Unit 7 (weeks 11–12)
Documentation production considerations. Working on large documents and document sets. Documentation management (revision control and determining when revisions need to be done; maintaining documentation; the organizational environment). Establishing online/context sensitive help. The emerging context: writing for mobile devices and other interfaces.

Unit 8 (week 13)
Presentation of projects and summary reports.