

WRTG 3830: Research in Professional Communication

Fall Semester 2025

Instructor: Natalie Stillman-Webb, Ph.D.
Email: natalie.stillman-webb@utah.edu
Office: LNCO 3708
Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 12:30-1:30pm

Course Description

Writing 3830 is a course for those interested in pursuing a career in professional and technical communication or for those interested in communicating effectively within their chosen field. The course introduces students to the foundations of research in professional and technical writing, including research methodologies. The class will explore research in contemporary issues related to professional communication, and students will conduct original research.

This is an asynchronous online course. Assignments will be due on Wednesdays by 11:59 pm.

Course Outcomes and Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Learn about professional communication research methodologies
- Assess academic research and established best practices in professional writing
- Analyze research into various professional communication issues, including ethics, visual rhetoric, usability, and technology
- Conduct primary and secondary research in professional communication

Course Requirements

The following is a list of the course assignments. See individual assignment instructions for specific grading criteria. Each major project will undergo revision: after composing a complete, polished draft, you'll receive feedback from your instructor and your peers.

Literature Review: For this project, students will research a topic of interest within the fields of professional, technical, or scientific writing. After conducting secondary research on the topic, students will synthesize the research sources and discuss trends in the research methodologies and findings. (300 points)

Ethnography: Students will have an opportunity to collect empirical research on professional communication in a particular organization, and then present the findings in a short report. (300 points)

Discussions & Collaborative Annotations: Interaction with classmates is important in learning elements of professional communication from texts. For discussions, you will submit your first, well-thought-out, multi-paragraph post before Wednesday at midnight, and then be sure to

respond thoroughly (with questions, commentary, or critique) to several classmates before Friday at midnight. For collaborative annotations, you will submit at least five thoughtful responses to specific passages in the text by Wednesday and at least three developed responses to classmates by Friday. (100 points)

Supporting Documents: We will employ the writing process as we complete our major projects by completing planning documents, paper drafts, peer review responses, research texts, etc. (around 300 points)

Grading Scale

Percentage	Letter Grade
93-100%	A
90-92%	A-
87-89%	B+
83-86%	B
80-82%	B-
77-79%	C+
73-76%	C
70-72%	C-
67-69%	D+
63-66%	D
60-62%	D-
0-59%	E

University Policies

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities.

All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the [Center for Disability & Access](#) (CDA). CDA will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. Prior notice is appreciated. To read the full accommodations policy for the University of Utah, please see Section Q of the [Instruction & Evaluation regulations](#).

In compliance with ADA requirements, some students may need to record course content. Any recordings of course content are for personal use only, should not be shared, and should never be made publicly available. In addition, recordings must be destroyed at the conclusion of the course.

If you will need accommodations in this class, or for more information about what support they provide, contact:

Center for Disability & Access

801-581-5020
disability.utah.edu
65 Student Services Building
201 S 1460 E
Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Safety at the U

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more safety information and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu.

To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, contact:

Campus Police & Department of Public Safety

801-585-COPS (801-585-2677)
dps.utah.edu
1735 E. S. Campus Dr.
Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Addressing Sexual Misconduct

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status, or genetic information.

If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to university officials:

Title IX Coordinator & Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

801-581-8365
oeo.utah.edu
135 Park Building
201 Presidents' Cir.
Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Office of the Dean of Students

801-581-7066

deanofstudents.utah.edu

270 Union Building

200 S. Central Campus Dr.

Salt Lake City, UT 84112

To file a police report, contact:

Campus Police & Department of Public Safety

801-585-COPS (801-585-2677)

dps.utah.edu

1735 E. S. Campus Dr.

Salt Lake City, UT 84112

If you do not feel comfortable reporting to authorities, the U's Victim-Survivor Advocates provide free, confidential, and trauma-informed support services to students, faculty, and staff who have experienced interpersonal violence.

To privately explore options and resources available to you with an advocate, contact:

Center for Campus Wellness

801-581-7776

wellness.utah.edu

350 Student Services Building

201 S. 1460 E.

Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Academic Misconduct

It is expected that students comply with University of Utah policies regarding academic honesty, including but not limited to refraining from cheating, plagiarizing, misrepresenting one's work, and/or inappropriately collaborating. This includes the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools without citation, documentation, or authorization. Students are expected to adhere to the prescribed professional and ethical standards of the profession/discipline for which they are preparing. Any student who engages in academic dishonesty or who violates the professional and ethical standards for their profession/discipline may be subject to academic sanctions as per the University of Utah's Student Code: [Policy 6-410: Student Academic Performance, Academic Conduct, and Professional and Ethical Conduct](#).

Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and may be punished by failure on an individual assignment, and/or failure in the course. Academic misconduct, according to the University of Utah Student Code:

"...Includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one's work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information...It also includes facilitating

academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct.”

For details on plagiarism and other important course conduct issues, see the U's [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).