

STT-Technical Communication in Earth Science

Earth Sciences 450

Section: D100

Term: 2006 Spring

Instructor: Dr. John Orwin

Discussion Topics: General:

The aim of this course is to provide earth science students with improved technical communication skills. The majority of the course will be centered on improving writing and editing skills to enable students to write technical papers, reports and theses in a clear, well structured manner. The emphasis throughout the course will be on learning by example and applying class based theory to writing problems. It is assumed that students have a good understanding of English grammar. The remainder of the course will focus on the production of effective technical poster presentations. As this is a writing intensive course, enrollment is limited to 10 students.

Course format:

EASC 450 is a seminar course, with full student participation. There will be one 2-hour seminar each week.

Writing module (80%)

Each weekly seminar will focus on a particular component of writing a technical paper. Topics include: defining your topic, planning and writing a draft, writing an effective introduction, designing tables and figures and so on. The seminar topics are cumulative and build on the previous week's topics. Several smaller writing assignments will also be assigned during the course. These assignments will be critiqued by the instructor and students during the seminars to provide feedback on writing. Note: the critiques will focus on the application of theory introduced in the seminars, not the content of the assignments.

Poster module (20%)

Each student will prepare, and present to the class a technical electronic poster that the instructor and class will evaluate.

Student evaluation criteria:

A written mid-term examination will evaluate the students' understanding of materials and concepts covered in the first half of the course.

A significant component of the course evaluation will be based on a paper written on a topic assigned by the instructor at the beginning of the semester. Students are expected to edit

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this paper throughout the course based on the skills learnt from the seminars. Students will be expected to justify and explain in writing the theory behind the changes they have made. The final paper will be assessed by the instructor in terms of organization, grammar, punctuation, spelling, style, clarity, and the degree to which the student has applied techniques taught in the course.

A written final exam will evaluate the students' understanding of materials and concepts covered in the full course.

Grading: Assignment completion 15%

Contributions to seminar discussions 10%

Electronic poster 15%

Mid term examination 15%

Paper 20%

Final Exam 25%

Required Texts: Strunk, W., Jr. and White, E.G. 2000. The Elements of Style. 4th Edition, Longman Publishers, New York

Recommended Texts: None.

Materials/Supplies: None.

Prerequisite/Corequisite: None.

Notes: Questions?

Contact John Orwin, jorwin@sfu.ca

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This outline is derived from a course outline repository database that was maintained by SFU Student Services and the University's IT Services Department. The database was retired in 2014 and the data migrated to SFU Archives in 2015.