Communication Skills

The Communication Skills program is located in the School of Languages and Linguistics and provides a unique facility in Australian university education. Its mission is to create a culture of student excellence in written and oral communication, presentation skills and the application of information technologies. The curriculum is designed to assist students in Arts and other faculties of the University with developing and refining their academic and professional communication skills. These skills-based subjects will be of direct benefit to many students in extending the vocational opportunities provided by the Bachelor of Arts and other degree programs.

Time commitment to study

As well as scheduled contact hours for lectures, tutorial and seminars a considerable additional time commitment is needed to complete the academic requirements of each subject.

A subject-specific time commitment to study will be provided by your lecturer or tutor at the beginning of semester to help you schedule your workload and successfully manage your time during the semester. In addition, general estimates of the total time commitment required to study a 12.5-point single semester subject in the Faculty of Arts can be found on page 1.

Skills subjects limitations

Communication Skills subjects, along with ESL subjects, computer skills subjects and subjects that focus on workplace skills, are termed 'skills-based subjects'. Students enrolled in an arts degree may credit a maximum of three skills subjects towards their course, with no more than two at second/third year level. See *Skills-based subjects (p.9)*. Students from other faculties should check for skills subject limitations at their Faculty Office.

Communication skills subjects

- 175-134 Project Based Communication *(p.1)*
- 175-210 Business and Management Writing *(p.1)*
- 175-211 Technical Writing *(p.1)*

These subjects are designed to develop students' academic and communication skills.

For more information

School of Languages and Linguistics
Fifth Floor, Arts Centre
The University of Melbourne 3010
Tel: +61 3 8344 5179

Email: lal-enquiries@unimelb.edu.au

Web: http://www.linguistics.unimelb.edu.au

Communication skills subjects

First/Second/third-year subject

175-134 Project Based Communication

Note: Formerly available as 145-003/134/234. Students who have completed 145-003/134/234 are not eligible to enrol in this subject.

Availability: 1st, 2nd and 3rd year

Credit points: 12.5

Coordinator: Dr Celia Thompson

Prerequisites: Non-native speakers will need to present evidence of English language proficiency (ie. 7 on IELTS or equivalent). There are no specific requirements for native speakers.

Contact: A 1-hour lecture and a 2-hour tutorial per week *(Semester 1, repeat 2).*

Description: This subject is designed to introduce students from all disciplinary backgrounds to a range of theories of communication through a project-based and critical approach to learning and research. Students will increase their understanding of the role played by web-based technologies, language, gender and culture in different communicative contexts. In addition, students will learn about the theory and practice of critical thinking and group dynamics. This subject will enable students to develop their speaking and writing abilities for a range of audiences using electronic media. Students will complete a variety of individual and group-based tasks including the presentation of a paper at a student-run conference. On completion of the subject students will have increased their knowledge of communication theory; will be able to undertake well-documented academic research, analyse scholarly texts critically and present their own research findings in both verbal and written formats.

Assessment: A collaborative project of 600 words 15% (due week 5); an abstract and annotated bibliography of 600 words 15% (due week 6); an oral presentation equivalent to 1000 words 25% (due week 10); a written research paper of 1,000 words 25% (due at the end of semester); and class exercises of 800 words 20% (due at the end of semester).

Prescribed texts: A reading package will be available at the University bookshop at the start of semester

Second/third-year subjects

175-210 Business and Management Writing

Note: Formerly available as 145-210. Students who have completed 145-210 are not eligible to enrol in this subject.

Availability: 2nd and 3rd year

Credit points: 12.5

Coordinator: Dr Joanna Tapper

Prerequisites: 100 points of university study at any level.

Contact: A 1-hour lecture and a 2-hour tutorial per week *(Semester 1).*

Description: In this subject students are introduced to concepts of communication as both constituting work, and enabling people to do their work and manage organisations. The subject is grounded in rhetorical theory, with a strong focus on the ways in which audience, purpose and persuasion shape written and oral workplace communication. Key aspects of workplace communication such collaboration, 'authorless' writing and recurrent revision of documents will be presented. Students will learn to analyse the requirements for different kinds of business and organisational documents (eg memos, letters, leaflets, reports), develop awareness of ethical and legal issues, and understand cross-cultural aspects of business writing. Students will apply theoretical content to practical writing and business meeting assignments.

Assessment: Written exercises totalling 1,000 words 20% (due throughout the semester), an analytical report of 1,500 words on a business document 40% (due at the end of semester), a collaborative meeting assignment of 1,500 words including written and spoken components (20% group grade and 20% individual grade) (due in week 8).

Prescribed texts: McKenna, B., Thomas, G. & Waddell, N., *Australian Guide to Corporate Communication,* Social Science Press, 2004.

175-211 Technical Writing

Note: Formerly available as 145-211. Students who have completed 145-211 are not eligible to enrol in this subject.

Availability: 2nd and 3rd year

Credit points: 12.5

Coordinator: Dr Joanna Tapper

Prerequisites: 100 points of university study at any level.

Contact: A 1-hour lecture and a 2-hour tutorial per week *(Semester 2).*

Description: The subject introduces students to the basic principles of technical communication. Subject content includes consideration of research studies on written, visual and oral technical communication, and the distinctive rhetorical and critical theory underlying this branch of communication. The subject is designed to enable students studying in a range of scientific, technical, humanities and social science fields to apply their existing skills and knowledge to technical communication contexts. Students will become aware of the challenges of technical communication, such as writing for the needs of varied readers, displaying information visually, and designing documents that help readers to use and understand information. Ethical, legal and cross-cultural aspects of technical communication will be covered. Students will study and produce standard types of technical documents such as proposals, instructions and reports. The collaborative nature of technical writing will be stressed in classwork and assignments. On completion of the subject, students should be able to analyse the requirements of technical communication situations, gather and present data and design documents that are suited to the needs of their readers.

Assessment: Written exercises totalling 1,000 words 20% (due throughout the semester), a technical report (individual) of 1,000 words 30% (due week 8), a collaborative user manual or procedures guide comprising written text, visuals, document design and oral presentation (group work) of 2,000 words 50% (due end of semester).

Prescribed texts: A Reading Package will be available from the University Book Shop.