This course will maximize your written and oral communication skills by challenging you to assess specific information technology-related situations, develop workable strategies, and implement those strategies to communicate clearly, confidently, and convincingly. This course develops skill with activities and assignments that replicate communication challenges you may face as an information technology (IT) professional, focusing specifically on the modes of analysis necessary for strategic IT planning and policy making. The course also familiarizes you with the rhetorical tools that inform the habits of highly-skilled workplace speakers/writers, and provides a collegial, dynamic, and immersive environment in which to practice using them.

In line with the Heinz College School of Information Systems mission for graduates to develop and deploy IT to create value for their organizations and society, this course will help you refine the fundamentals of workplace communication, and develop best practices for creating written and spoken messages that support effective IT problem-solving and decision-making.

This course assumes proficiency in English, and is not designed to provide instruction in basic elements of grammar and usage.

WHAT MATERIALS WILL I NEED?

1. Access to course readings and handouts posted on Canvas (some may require printing)
2. Laptop computer

WHAT CAN I EXPECT TO DO?

The class is grounded in the following habitual practices:

1. **Writing and Speaking.** During nearly every week of class you will either produce or revise a piece of writing or an oral message ranging from short documents/presentations to a final longer work of analysis. You will be constantly creating, revising, and improving your ideas.
2. **Reading.** You will be asked to read and review selected articles, chapters, handouts, and/or online resources related to writing/speaking technique and process, rhetorical theory, and/or effective communication strategy.
3. **Feedback.** Assignments will receive feedback from one or more of the following: the members of your communication team, the TA, the professor. The prep memo and team assignments will not receive feedback but will be reviewed by the TA and will receive a numeric score based on content, format, length, and accuracy (including grammar and proofreading).
4. **Collegial group work.** Throughout the course you will work in teams of three or four to assess workplace communication scenarios, analyze strengths and weaknesses of professional
documents written by yourselves and by others, create strategies for writing documents and/or preparing oral presentations, and write, revise and edit documents.

5. Dynamic interaction. This course runs as a graduate seminar – not as a lecture – that relies on your membership and participation in a community of information systems and technology professionals. Rather than review the ideas in the readings/course materials, we will practice applying them to the kinds of communication challenges that you will encounter in your career as a systems and technology professional.

HOW CAN I DO WELL IN THIS COURSE?

1. Be prepared by familiarizing yourself with reading materials and resources each week; carefully proofread all of your assignments and submit them on time.
2. Take notes during live class sessions—studies show that writing things down on paper significantly improves ability to cognitively process and retain information.
3. Bring your best and most innovative ideas and be willing to try new things! Invest in your development as a professional writer and speaker, whether you have a little or a lot of experience.
4. Participate in on-line discussions by asking questions, offering ideas, and providing feedback.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT TO TAKE AWAY?

At the conclusion of this course you will be able to:

1. Use language precisely and concisely to create public/professional presence
2. Establish credibility in front of an audience through calculated verbal and nonverbal delivery techniques
3. Identify writing/speaking strengths and weaknesses; self-direct strategies for improvement and offer constructive feedback for the professional development of colleagues
4. Create effective writing/speaking strategy and translate it into compelling, convincing, and actionable messages
5. Synthesize information from multiple sources to make IT recommendations, formulate IT solutions, and/or develop strategies
6. Format and edit professional documents with precision and accuracy

WHAT ARE THE COURSE ASSIGNMENTS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Deliverables</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Participation, group work, and feedback</td>
<td>Case Challenge Presentation, peer reviews, discussions (200)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Individual speaking/writing assignments</td>
<td>Short Presentation (100) LinkedIn Summary (100) Short Professional Doc (200)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Final project: IT Recommendation Report</td>
<td>Final draft with strategy memo, transmittal and references (400)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Schedule of Meetings and Deadlines *(subject to change)*

*All assignments should be submitted to Canvas by 11:59pm Eastern Standard Time on the due date*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Objective</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Readings/Resources</th>
<th>Work Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| July 18 3-5pm  | Assessing and meeting the presentation challenge  
Assessing and meeting the presentation challenge  
View and analyze sample presentations  
Preparing and using notes | -Delivery, Posture  
-Voice, Basics  
-Structure  
-Cheatsheet  
-Decision What to Say | Prepare to give short presentation on 7/19  
(upload speaking notes to Canvas before 12:30pm on 7/19) |
| July 19 12:30-2:30pm  | Short presentations (recorded)  
Think, Edit, Speak  
Case Challenge Presentation preview | -Audience, objectives (Chapters 1, 2 Abela) and Monroe sequence | Review reading materials before 3pm on 7/20 |
| July 20 3-5pm  | Case Challenge Presentation & debrief | -LinkedIn Samples & Writing Tips  
-You Attitude  
-What Do You Mean You Don’t Like My Style? | Review reading materials before 1:30pm on 7/21 |
| July 21 1:30-3:30pm  | Workplace writer’s template  
Writing for LinkedIn  
Review assignment submission and peer review process and set objectives for remainder of the course | -LinkedIn Summary due 8/2  
Summary memo due 8/4 | Review LinkedIn Summary draft to peer review partner by 7/26; complete peer review by 7/30 (upload to Canvas and send to review partner) |

**Week of 7/24**

- Draft and peer review week

**Week of 7/31**

- Meeting the Writing Challenge
  - What characteristics do effective professional documents have in common?
  - Writing essentials
    - The 3 P’s

- "Fundamentals of Professional Writing" (Mizrahi)
- "Planning Your Writing" (Danziger)
- "Letters and Memos" (Blake and Bly)
- Rhetorical Analysis (handout)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of 8/7</th>
<th>Identifying Effective Writing Strategy</th>
<th>Discussion: IT strategic plan document analysis</th>
<th>IT Strategic Plan (JMU)</th>
<th>Participate in discussion by 8/11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week of 8/14</td>
<td>Draft and peer review week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Send short professional document draft to peer review partner by 8/16; complete peer review by 8/20 (upload to Canvas and send to review partner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week of 8/21</td>
<td>Creating Effective Writing Strategy</td>
<td>Discussion: IT Missions &amp; Roles</td>
<td>“IT Missions”</td>
<td>Short professional document (final) due 8/23; Participate in discussion by 8/28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week of 8/28</td>
<td>Consultation Week: Final project topics and strategy</td>
<td>“Organizing Information Effectively” (Danziger)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Complete final project consultations (in groups) and by 9/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week of 9/4</td>
<td>Implementing Effective Writing Strategy</td>
<td>Begin final project draft using organic outlining technique</td>
<td>Citation resources “Communicating through Visuals”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week of 9/11</td>
<td>Preparing Your Document for Distribution</td>
<td>Review final checklist; citation formats, document formatting and transmittal</td>
<td>Final project document (with transmittal, strategy memo, and references) due 9/18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**HOW WILL MY WORK BE ASSESSED?**

**Academic Integrity**

You will be required to submit all assignments through Turnitin and/or Safe Assign via Canvas. Plagiarism and/or cheating is a serious offense and will result in failure of the course. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the associate dean’s office, where additional penalties may be imposed. Submission of written work completed for another class is considered plagiarism, and will be treated as such. With the exception of the team writing assignments, all assignments are to be
completed individually and the work you submit must be wholly your own. Please reference *Carnegie Mellon University’s Policy on Academic Integrity* [http://www.cmu.edu/academic-integrity/](http://www.cmu.edu/academic-integrity/)

**Submission and Assessment of Deliverables**
Complete instructions for all assignments will be posted and will be explained in detail during class. Please submit all assignments (except first drafts) to Canvas before the start of class on the due date, unless otherwise noted. Assignments will not be accepted via email. Please upload your document (in word doc format) to the appropriate link under the “Deliverables” tab using the following file name: lastname_firstname_assignmenttitle.doc. *Grades are non-negotiable* and are earned based on quality of work as evaluated against the course rubric that is posted on Blackboard.

**Heinz College Grading** *Source: Heinz College Student Handbook*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>98-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>94-97.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>90-93.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>87-89.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Acceptable</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>84-86.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>80-83.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>74-79.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Late Submission Policy**
Due to the concentrated mini schedule, late work will not be accepted and make-up assignments and/or extensions will not be granted except in rare cases of a documented emergency or illness, communicated to the instructor by your program director. If you miss a peer review, and revision session, or a team meeting you will forfeit those points. There are no extra credit or alternative assignment options.