CSE/ISE300 Communications S12

- Time: Tue/Thur 5:20-6:40PM
- Location: Room E4315 Melville Library, 4th floor, east wing
- Required Book: *The Elements of Style*, 4th edition (Sep 1999), by Strunk & White, 978-0205313426, $10 new (or $5 bookstore rental)
- Free Online Webbook: *Technical Writing*, by David McMurrey
  http://www.prismnet.com/~hcexres/textbook/
- Instructor: Professor Larry Wittie  TA: Eric Papenhausen
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- Course Homepage: http://www.cs.sunysb.edu/~lw/teaching/cse300

Graded paper1 drafts back in class today, 14 Feb; revise for 16 Feb.
First paper on favorite shoes due at start of next class, Thurs. 2/16.
Due to  

Due to should not be used for through, because of, or owing to in adverbial phrases. Due to means “attributable to” and is used in adjectival phrases.
He lost the game due to carelessness.
The accident was due to bad weather. Losses due to brush fires cost California more than $1 billion last year.

Each and every one  

Advertising jargon that should be avoided.
It should be a lesson to each and every one of us.
It should be a lesson to us all.

Effect/Affect  

As a noun, effect means “result”; as a verb, it means “to bring about” or “to accomplish.” The verb affect means “to influence.” The noun effect is overused in vague writing about the arts: “subtle effects”, “very delicate effects.”
CSE/ISE 300
Strunk and White: Commonly Misused Words

Enormity    Use *enormity* only to mean “monstrous wickedness.”
It is misleading, if not wrong, when used to mean only “bigness.”

Enthuse    Avoid this verb created from the noun *enthusiasm*.

*She was enthused about her new car.*

*She enthused about her new car.*

*She was enthusiastic about her new car.*

*She talked enthusiastically about her new car.*

Etc.    *Et cetera* literally means “and other things,” but is used improperly to mean “and other persons.” It is equivalent to “and so forth” and should not be used if the reader would be left in doubt about any important items. In formal writing, avoid *etc*.

Facility    *Facility* is overused for hospitals, jails, and prisons.

*He has been appointed warden of the new facility.*

*He has been appointed warden of the new prison.*
Fact  Use fact only for matters that can be directly verified, but not for matters of opinion. The melting point of lead is a fact, but that California has a wonderful climate is only an opinion.

Factor  Factor is a hackneyed word; its expressions usually can be replaced by wording that is shorter and clearer.

Her superior training was the great factor in her winning.  She won by being better trained.

Farther/Further  Although commonly interchanged, there is a subtle distinction between farther and further. Farther serves best for physical distances; further is best for quantities or time.

You can chase a ball farther than another player; you pursue a subject further.
Finalize  Avoid *finalize*, which is a pompous and ambiguous business verb. Does it mean “terminate” or “put in final form”?

Fix  *Fix* is well established in America as colloquial for *arrange*, *prepare*, and *mend*. Its preferred meanings are derived from its Latin root *figere*, “to make firm” or “to place definitely.”

Flammable  The common word *inflammable* means “combustable.” Lest some people think it means “not combustable,” safety signs on the backs of trucks say “Flammable Liquid.” Write *inflammable*. A mixture of oil and gasoline is highly flammable.

Folk  The collective noun *folk* is equivalent to *people* and always properly used only in the singular form. The colloquial *folks* meaning “parents,” “family,” or “those present” should be avoided. Your folks are here! Your parents are here!
Fortuitous  *Fortuitous* means “happened by chance.” It does not mean *fortunate* or *lucky.*

He was fortuitous to fill a royal flush.  

He was lucky to fill a royal flush.

Get  The colloquial *have got* for *have* should be avoided in writing. The preferrable form of the participle is *got,* not *gotten.*

He has not got any sense.  He has no sense.

They returned without having gotten any fish.  They returned without having got any fish.

Gratuitous  *Gratuitous* means “unearned” or “undeserved.”

The insult was gratuitous.
CSE/ISE 300

First Paper - My Favorite Shoes

Your printed completed paper is due at start of the next class, Thursday 2/16/12. Center the title, your name, and the date at the top. The paper should be 1.0 page (30+ lines and at least 450 words) to 1.3 pages (~40 lines, about 600 words) in length, with lines spaced 1.5 (between single- and double-spaced), text lines 6 inches wide, and about 15 words per line. Use font 12 (or larger). The title, your name, the date, and blank lines do not count in the required 30+ lines. Aim for 36 lines (540 words) of text to be safe. Number the pages of all three papers in ‘300.

Avoid common writing errors (see lect02, slides 2 – 6; lect04, slides 5 – 6; and rules from Strunk & White text).

Email *doc for your 16Feb paper to lw@ic.sunysb.edu with the Subject: 300 paper 1 - My Favorite Shoes.
CSE/ISE 300
Grades for Printed Draft of First Paper - Favorite Shoes

![Bar Chart: Grade Count Draft2 Paper1 S12 '300](chart.png)
He is a man who
Avoid redundant phrases of this common type.
He is a man who is very ambitious.  He is very ambitious.
Vermont is a state that attracts Vermont attracts winter visitors for skiing.
winter visitors for skiing.

Hopefully
Hopefully was formerly a useful adverb meaning “with hope” or “full of hope”. It is now widely used to mean “I hope” or “it is to be hoped.” Avoid hopefully in your writing. It offends the ear of educated readers and sounds silly to them.
Hopefully I will leave on the I hope to leave on the noon plane.

However
Used first in a sentence, however means “in whatever way” or “to whatever extent.” Not first, it can mean “nevertheless.”
The road was bearly passible.  The road was bearly passible.
However, at last we got home.  At last, however, we got home.
However discouraging the prospect, they never lost heart.
Imply/Infer  The words *imply* and *infer* are not the same. Something implied is suggested or indicated, but not expressed directly. Something inferred is deduced from evidence at hand. 
**Farming implies early rising.** Since she was a farmer, we inferred that she got up early.

Importantly  Avoid *importantly.*

More importantly, he paid for the damages.  More important, he paid for the damages.
What is more, he paid for the damages.

In regard to  *In regard to* is wrongly written *in regards to*. On the other hand, *as regards to* is correct and the same as *in regard to*.

In the last analysis  Avoid this overused, bankrupt expression.
Inside of/Inside

*Inside of* is correct to mean “in less than.” For other meanings, avoid *of* after *inside*; *inside* is correct alone.

*Inside of five minutes, I shall be inside the bank.*

Insightful

*Insightful* should be used only for instances of remarkably penetrating vision. *Perceptive* is almost always better.

*Your remark was insightful.*  
*Your remark was perceptive.*

In terms of

*In terms of* is padding that is usually best omitted.

*The job was unattractive in terms of salary.*  
*The salary made the job unattractive.*

Interesting/Funny

These unconvincing words should be avoided in introductions. Say something funny, not that it will be funny.

*In connection with the forthcoming visit of Mr. B. to America, it is interesting to recall that he …*  
*Mr. B., who will soon visit America, …*
Irregardless  *Irregardless* is not a word. *Regardless* is the correct spelling. The negative *ir-* is suggested by the words *irregular*, *irresponsible*, and *irrespective*, which lack the negative *-less*.

-ize  Never tack *-ize* onto a noun to form a new verb. Be wary of existing *-ize* verbs. *Fertilize*, *harmonize*, and *summarize* are useful; *containerize*, *prioritize*, and *finalize* are not. Prefer *use* over *utilize*.

Kind of/Sort of  These phrases should not be used to mean “rather” or “something like”. Restrict them to their literal senses: “Amber is a kind of fossil resin”; “I dislike that sort of publicity.”

Her brother is kind of handsome. **Her brother is rather handsome.**

Lay/Lie  *Lay* is a transitive verb and must have an object. *Lie* must not. The forms are *lay*, *laid*, *laid*, *laying*; *lie*, *lay*, *lain*, *lying*. *A hen lays an egg; a llama lies down. After his new play laid an egg, the playwright went home and lay down.*
Leave/Let  *Leave* is misused as a substitute for *let.*

Leave go of that rope!  Let go of that rope!

Less/Fewer  *Less* should not be misused for *fewer.* *Less* refers to quantity; *fewer* refers to number. Occasionally, either word may be used, but with different meanings. “His troubles are less than mine” means “His troubles are not so great as mine.” “His troubles are fewer than mine” says “His troubles are not so numerous as mine.”

They had less workers than in the previous campaign.  They had fewer workers than in the previous campaign.

Like/As  *Like* should not be used for the conjunction *as.* *Like* precedes a noun or pronoun; *as* comes before phrases or clauses.

We spent the evening like in the old days.  We spent the evening as in the old days.

June smells good, like a baby should.  June smells good, as a baby should.
Line/Along these lines  *Line* meaning “course of thought or conduct” is allowable but overworked in phrases like “along these lines”. Writers should avoid continued use of *line* in this sense.

Mr. Jones also spoke along the same lines.  Mr. Jones also spoke to the same effect.

She is studying along the line of French literature.  She is studying French literature.

Literal/Literally  *Literally* is often incorrectly used in exageration.

A literal flood of abuse  A flood of abuse

literally dead with fatigue  almost dead with fatigue

Loan/Lend  *Loan* is a noun. The corresponding verb is *lend*.

Lend me your eyes.  Please give me a five dollar loan.

Please loan me five dollars.  Please lend me five dollars.
Meaningful

Avoid the bankrupt adjective *meaningful*.

His was a meaningful contribution.

We are instituting many meaningful changes in the curriculum.

His contribution counted heavily.

We are improving the curriculum in many ways.

Memento

*Memento* is incorrectly spelled as *momento*.

Most/Almost

*Most* is not to be used to replace *almost*.

most everybody

almost everybody

most all the time

almost all the time

Nature

If used like *character*, *nature* is almost always redundant.

Also avoid vague phrases like “a student of nature.”

acts of a hostile nature

hostile acts
Nauseous/Nauseated  
*Nauseous* means “sickening to contemplate”; *nauseated* means “sick at the stomach”.
I feel nauseous.  
I feel nauseated.

Nice  
*Nice* is an all-purpose word, normally of indistinct meaning. Avoid it in writing, except to mean “precise” or “fine.”
I had a nice time in the nice weather.  
Hers was a nice distinction.

Nor  
*Nor* is often used incorrectly for *or* after negatives.
He cannot eat nor sleep.  
He cannot eat or sleep.
He can neither eat nor sleep.
He cannot eat nor can he sleep.

Nouns used as verbs  
All nouns used as verbs are suspect.
She headquarters in Dallas.  
She has headquarters in Dallas.
He chaired the meeting.  
He was chair of the meeting.
CSE/ISE 300
Strunk and White: Commonly Misused Words

Offputting/Ongoing  Avoid the newfound adjectives ongoing and offputting because they are clumsy and inexact. As a simple test, transform the participles to verbs. Can one offput or ongo?

One/One’s  One in the sense of “a person” must not be followed by his or her. One’s is the correct possessive form.

One must watch his step.  One must watch one’s step.

One of the most  Avoid this feeble formula in your writing.

-oriented  Avoid this clumsy, pretentious device.

It is a manufacturing-oriented company.  It is chiefly a manufacturing company.
Partially/Partly     *Partially* is not always interchangeable with *partly*. *Partially* is best used in the sense of “to a certain degree” when speaking of a condition. *Partly* carries the idea of a part of a physical object as distinct from the whole object.

The log was partially submerged. **The log was partly submerged.**

I am partially resigned to it.

People/Public/Person     *The people* is not the same as *the public*. *The people* give political support or opposition; *the public* give artistic recognition or commercial success. *People* should not be used with numbers, as a substitute for *persons*. One can say “five persons” or “one person,” but “one people” is not “one person.”

Personalize     Avoid this pretentious -*ize* word in your writing.

*a highly personalized affair*     *a highly personal affair*

personalize your stationery     design a letterhead