CSE/ISE 300 Communication  F11

• Time: Tue/Thur 5:20-6:40PM
• Location: Room 102  Light Engineering
• Required Book: The Elements of Style, 4th edition (2000), Authors: Strunk and White $10 (or $4 2007 reprint by Coyote)
• Online Technical Writing, Author: David A. McMurrey  http://www.io.com/~hcexres/textbook/
• Recommended Textbook: Pocket Guide to Technical Communication, 5th ed. (2011).  Author: Pfeiffer $42 list; $33 Amazon ($26+$4 used)
• Instructor: Professor Larry Wittie  TA: Sean Munson
• Office: CS Building, Room 1308
• Phone: 631-632-8750  (not 2-8456)
• Email: lw@ic.sunysb.edu
• Office Hours: 3:45-5:15PM Tue & Thu or by appointment
• Course Homepage: http://www.cs.sunysb.edu/~lw/teaching/cse300

Paper 1 My Weekend with Irene, graded and back Tuesday, 9/27.
Start writing a draft of your Memo2 in class and hand it in today.
CSE/ISE 300
Required Two-Page Memo2

Memo2 is an English essay due Thursday, 6 Oct 2011 as one printed copy in class & a .doc file emailed to lw@ic.sunysb.edu

Subject: 300 memo2  Why I Need a New Work Computer.

Put a title, your name and the paper’s last print date centered on a cover page for your “2.2-page” memo. Use 1.5 lines spacing. Make memo lines 6 inches long with 30 lines per page of text. Make the text of your memo from 60 to 75 lines (2 to 2.5 pages, 850 to 1150 words). Address your boss politely. Number your pages.

Assume the reader is your computer-savvy, but non-expert boss in a company with 20 or fewer employees. The boss has announced that the firm will buy new computers for some employees, those most needing one for their jobs. Justify why the firm will benefit from buying you (or your team) new computer(s). Be specific on why you need a new machine, what computer model with what features, and what price from what source. After the 2.2 pages of memo text list all web and printed references used for your paper.
Write a technical essay in English on the topic:

Why I Need a New Work Computer

Explain why you need a new computer, what type, and how it will increase your value to the firm. (In doing so, let me know what is the business of your company, but in a way that will not bore your boss, who knows about the business, but not why you need a new machine for your own job.) Describe the key features of the new computer and why they are critical. Tell what brand, model, cost, and vendor precisely. (List websites with these details in a References section at the end.)

Convince your boss to spend a little money.

(Cover page, salutation, and final References list do not count in the 2 to 2.5 pages. Only memo prose paragraphs count as text; feature lists, quoted material, and images do not.)
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  \textit{Leave} is misused as a substitute for \textit{let}.

\begin{itemize}
  \item Leave go of that rope!
  \item Let go of that rope!
\end{itemize}

Less/Fewer  \textit{Less} should not be misused for \textit{fewer}. \textit{Less} refers to quantity; \textit{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.”

\begin{itemize}
  \item They had less workers than in the previous campaign.
  \item They had fewer workers than in the previous campaign.
\end{itemize}

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

\begin{itemize}
  \item We spent the evening like in the old days.
  \item June smells good, like a baby should.
  \item We spent the evening as in the old days.
  \item June smells good, as a baby should.
\end{itemize}
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.
She is studying along the line of French literature.

Mr. Jones also spoke to the same effect.
She is studying French literature.

Literal/Literally  
Literally is often incorrectly used in exaggeration.

A flood of abuse
almost dead with fatigue

A flood of abuse
Mr. Jones also spoke to the same effect.

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

Lend me your eyes.
Please loan me five dollars.

Please give me a five dollar loan.
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.

Memento  Memento is incorrectly spelled as momento.

Most/Almost  Most is not to be used to replace almost.

most everybody
most 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

acts of a hostile nature
Stationary/Stationery  Stationary means “motionless”; stationery means “paper and envelopes to write letters.” Think e for envelope.

Student body  Almost always replace student body by students.
  a member of the student body  a student
  popular with the student body  liked by students

Than  To avoid ambiguity, examine any sentence using than (to express comparison) to see if any essential words are missing.
  I am probably closer to my mother than my father.  I am probably closer to my mother than to my father.
  I am probably closer to my mother than my father is.

Thanking you in advance  Avoid this phrase. It just says that you will not bother to write again, even if common courtesy suggests that you send an acknowledgement.
That/Which

*That* is the defining, or restrictive pronoun; *which* is the non-defining pronoun. Avoid reversing the two words.

- The lawn mower *that* is broken is in the garage. *(which one)*
- The lawn mower, *which* is broken, is in the garage. *(extra fact)*

The foreseeable future

Avoid this fuzzy cliché.

The truth is …/The fact is … Avoid these bad starts to a sentence. If you have the truth, just state it without advance billing.

They/He or she

Do not use the plural pronoun *they* when the antecedent is a singular noun, *anybody, somebody, someone,* or a distributive expression such as *each, each one, everybody, every one,* or *many a man.* Use the singular pronoun *he, she,* or *he or she.*

- Every one of us knows they are fallible.
- Every one of us knows he is fallible.
They/He or she (continued) Consider these strategies to avoid awkward overuse of he or she or unintentional emphasis on the masculine.

Use the plural rather than the singular forms of words throughout.

The writer must address his readers’ concerns.

Writers must address their readers’ concerns.

Eliminate the singular pronoun altogether.

The writer must address his readers’ concerns.

The writer must address readers’ concerns.

Substitute the second person for the third person.

The writer must address his readers’ concerns.

As a writer, you must address your readers’ concerns.
This The pronoun *this*, when used to refer to the sense of the complete preceding sentence or clause, may seem to refer to just the last part, making the meaning ambiguous. Reword to correct.

Visiting dignitaries watched yesterday as ground was broken for the new high-energy physics laboratory with a blowout safety wall. This is the first visible evidence of the university’s plans for modernization and expansion.

*Visiting dignitaries watched yesterday as ground was broken for the new high-energy physics laboratory with a blowout safety wall. The ceremony afforded the first visible evidence of the university’s plans for modernization and expansion.*
Thrust
This showy noun, with its suggestion of power and hint of sex, is much abused by executives and politicians. Use it sparingly and in its specific technical meanings.
The thrust of his letter was that he was working more hours than he had bargained for.
The piston has a five-inch thrust.

Tortuous/Torturous
A winding road is tortuous; a painful ordeal is torturous. Both words derive from Latin for “twist.”
With its many turns, the mountain road was torturous.

Transpire
Use transpire only to mean “become known” or “leak out.” Do not use it to mean simply “happen” or “come to pass.”
What transpired yesterday? Eventually, the account of his villainy transpired.