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. McMurray  http://www.io.com/~hcexres/textbook/
- Instructor: Professor Larry Wittie   TA: Sean Munson
- Office: CS Building, Room 1308   TA Office: 2110 CSB
- Phone: 631-632-8750 (not 2-8456)   TA Hours: 11AM-1PM, Weds
- 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 last Tuesday, 9/27.
Commented draft of your Memo2 handed back today, Tuesday, 10/4/11.
CSE/ISE 300
Required Two-Page Memo2

Memo2 is an English essay due Thursday, 13 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.
CSE/ISE 300

Two-Page Memo2: Paper & Email due 13 Oct.

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. Just memo paragraphs count as text; feature lists, quoted material, and images do not.)
The Writing Center is located in 2009 Humanities Building. Their telephone number is (631) 632-7405. It is a service of the Program in Writing & Rhetoric. They will give you free help with writing papers and reports, but you must make an appointment before you go to them for help. There may be a delay of several days.

CSE/ISE 300
First Comments on Paper1 about Irene

Of the 52 papers submitted, the grades were:
44% = 23 A’s   40% = 21 B’s   15% = 8 C’s   plus 1 F for no paper.

If you got a C or F, you will have to work hard to pass this course:
1. See me Thursday or next Tuesday at 4PM or 7PM in 1308 CSB.
2. Read both texts cover-to-cover and revise all your papers as much as I or the TA agree to read them.
3. Make an appoint immediately with the Writing Center.
4. Attend class regularly, submit all papers, and give both talks.

If you got a B, start early on the next papers and ask questions.
CSE/ISE 300
Strunk and White: Commonly Misused Words

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.
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.

-orientated  Avoid this clumsy, pretentious device.

  It is a manufacturing-orientated 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*  

*design a letterhead*
CSE/ISE 300
Strunk and White: Commonly Misused Words

Personally  
*Personally* is often unnecessary.

> Personally, I thought it was a good book.  
> I thought it was a good book.  

Possess  
Avoid using *possess* simply because it sounds more impressive than *have* or *own*.

> She possessed great courage.  
> She had great courage.  

> He was the fortunate possessor of  
> He was lucky enough to own

Presently  
*Presently* has two meanings: “soon” and “currently.” To avoid ambiguity, use it only when it means “soon.”

> She will be here presently.  
> We are presently reviewing your resume.  
> We are reviewing your resume now.
Prestigious  *Prestigious* is another vague adjective to avoid.

Regretful  *Regretful* means “full of regret”, but is carelessly used as a substitute for *regrettable*, meaning “must be regretted.”

The mixup was due to a regretful failure in planning.  The mixup was due to a regrettable failure in planning.

Relate  *Relate* should not use intransitively to suggest rapport.

I relate well to Janet.  Janet and I agree a lot.

Respective/Respectively  These words usually should be omitted.

Works of fiction are listed under the names of their respective authors.  Works of fiction are listed under the names of their authors.

The mile run and the two-mile run were won by Jones and Cummings respectively.  The mile run was won by Jones, the two-mile run by Cummings.
Secondly/Thirdly … Do not prettify numbers with -ly. Use first, second, third, and so on.

Shall/Will The future tense normally is expressed by I shall, you will, she will. To express determination or emphatic consent, the uses of shall and will are reversed - I will, you shall, he shall.

So Avoid the use of so as an intensifier: “so good”; “so warm.”

Split infinitive Avoid placing an adverb between a to and its verb infinitive, unless you want to place unusual stress on the adverb.

to diligently inquire to inquire diligently

We hope to soundly defeat our opponents in tonight’s game.

State State should not be used as a mere substitute for say or remark. Restrict state to mean “express fully and completely.”

What did he state at the party? What did he say at the party?

She refused to state her objections.
Next 5 slides first shown in Lect08 F11

Strunk and White: Commonly Misused Words

Stationary/Stationery --- Transpire
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 singlular 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.
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.
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.

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.

Use transpire only to mean “become known” or “leak out.” Do not use it to mean simply “happen” or “come to pass.”

Eventually, the account of his villainy transpired.
Next 4 slides first shown in Lect09
Strunk and White: Commonly Misused Words
Try and/Try to --- Would
Try and/Try to

Try and mend it, please.  Try to mend it, please.

Type

Try takes to, the infinitive form of a verb, not and.

Try and mend it, please.  Try to mend it, please.

Type

Type is not a synonym for kind of.

that type employee
that kind of employee
I dislike that type publicity.
I dislike that kind of publicity.
small, home-type hotels
small, homelike hotels
a new type plane
a plane of a new design

Unique

Unique means “without like or equal.” There are no degrees of uniqueness.

It is the most unique coffee maker on the market.
It is a unique coffee maker.
The balancing act was very unique.
The balancing act was unique.
The most unique spider lives under water in a bubble.
A unique spider lives under water in a bubble.
CSE/ISE 300

Strunk and White: Commonly Misused Words

Utilize/Use  Prefer simple *use* to the -ize word *utilize*.
I utilized the facilities.  I used the toilet.
He utilized the dishwasher.  He used the dishwasher.

Verbal/Oral  *Verbal* means “of words” and may refer to expressions in writing or in speech.  *Oral* means “of mouth” and limits words to those that are spoken.  *Oral agreement* and *written agreement* are very precise phrases; *verbal agreement* is less clear.
We reached verbal agreement.  We reached oral agreement.
We reached written agreement.

Very  Use the word *very* only sparingly.  Where emphasis is needed, use words strong in themselves.
WhileAvoid using while as a substitute for although, and, or but. Prefer while in its literal sense: “during the time that.” Where while is used for and or but, it often can be replaced by a semicolon.
The offices and salesrooms are on the ground floor, while the rest of the building is used for manufacturing.
While temperatures reach 90 or 95 degrees in the daytime, nights in the high desert are often cold.

-wiseThe pseudosuffix -wise can wrongly be added to any noun, usually with distasteful results: taxwise, pricewise, poemwise, taffywise. It is chiefly useful to mean: “in the manner of”: clockwise. Avoid the temptation to coin new words by adding -wise.
Worth while/Worthwhile  
Not worth while is overworked as a phrase for vague disapproval. Avoid using it. Worth while is correctly applied only to actions. The one-word adjective worthwhile is weak and should be avoided.  
His books are not worth while.  
His books are not worth reading.  
His books are not worth one’s while to read.  
a worthwhile project  
a promising project  
an exciting project

Would  
Would is commonly used to express habitual or repeated action. When repetition is indicated by such phrases as once a year, every day, each Sunday, the past tense without would is better.  
He would get up early and prepare his own breakfast before he went to work.  
Once a year he would visit the old mansion.  
Once a year he visited the old mansion.