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  TA Office: 2110 CSB
• Phone: 631-632-8750 (not 2-8456)  TA Hours: 11AM-1PM, Weds
• Email: lw@ic.sunysb.edu  TA Email: smunson@cs.stonybrook.edu
• Office Hours: 3:45-5:15PM Tue & Thu or by appointment
• Course Homepage: http://www.cs.sunysb.edu/~lw/teaching/cse300

Short grammar quiz in class today Tuesday 25 Oct 2011. Use a pen.
Graded memo 2 “New Computer” papers back next Tuesday.
ISE/CSE-300 Oral Presentation Evaluation Form

YOUR NAME: ___________________________________________ Today’s Date___________

Talk 1: Speaker

1. Speaker’s Name____________________________________

2. Did the presenter speak clearly; was the speaker understandable?
   Unclear 1  2  3  4  5 Very clear

3. Did the slide(s) have the right amount of information?
   Poor slides 1  2  3  4  5 Excellent slides

4. Did the speaker engage the audience well, make appropriate eye contact?
   Poor engagement 1  2  3  4  5 Excellent engagement

5. How well did the speaker know the material?
   Poorly 1  2  3  4  5 Very well

6. How well were you convinced of the speaker’s points?
   Not convinced 1  2  3  4  5 Completely convinced

Talk 2: Speaker

...
• How well did the audience understand the speaker’s main points?
• How enthusiastic was the speaker?
• Did the speaker use good body language?
• Did the speaker often pause and use filler sounds?
• (What can we judge from a 6 minute talk with 3 slides?)
Talks are a max of 6 minutes with 2 or 3 slides

Talks will feature 8 or 9 speakers per class and start next Tuesday (1 Nov.) and run for 3 weeks.

Talk dates: Tue. 1 Nov, Thu. 3 Nov, Tue. 8 Nov, Thu. 10 Nov., Tue. 15 Nov., and Thu. 17 Nov.

I will provide an audiovisual PC, with VGA + USB ports, that can display .ppt (not .pptx) format slides. Bring talk slides to class early on a USB disk, CD, or DVD, or make prior arrangements with me or TA.

If you prefer a specific date for your talk, send me email (lw@ic.sunysb.edu) before 9pm Wed 26 Oct.
All talks should justify a new work computer

If you prefer a specific date for your talk, send me email (lw@ic.sunysb.edu) before 9pm Wed 26 Oct.

I will display a list of the next week’s speakers in class each Thursday, starting 27 Oct.

If not enough of you volunteer for a given date by the Wednesday before the weekend, I will select next week’s speakers by my own methods.

This will be the only talk this semester for most of you. Speakers who do poorly (less than B) will be allowed to give a second talk, for an averaged higher grade if the second talk is better.
Excerpt from “The Science of Scientific Writing” p. 3-4, on website.

Each unit of discourse, no matter what the size, is expected to serve a single function, to make a single point. In the case of a sentence, the point is expected to appear in a specific place reserved for emphasis.

The Stress Position
It is a linguistic commonplace that readers naturally emphasize the material that arrives at the end of a sentence. We refer to that location as a “stress position.” If a writer is consciously aware of this tendency, she can arrange for the emphatic information to appear at the moment the reader is naturally exerting the greatest reading emphasis. As a result, the chances greatly increase that reader and writer will perceive the same material as being worthy of primary emphasis. The very structure of the sentence thus helps persuade the reader of the relative values of the sentence’s contents.

The inclination to direct more energy to that which arrives last in a sentence seems to correspond to the way we work at tasks through time. We tend to take something like a “mental breath” as we begin to read each new sentence, thereby summoning the tension with which we pay attention to the unfolding of the syntax. As we recognize that the sentence is drawing toward its conclusion, we begin to exhale that mental breath. The exhalation produces a sense of emphasis. Moreover, we delight in being rewarded at the end of a labor with something that makes the ongoing effort worthwhile. Beginning with the exciting material and ending with a lack of luster often leaves us disappointed and destroys our sense of momentum. We do not start with the strawberry shortcake and work our way up to the broccoli.
Excerpt from “The Science of Scientific Writing” p. 4-5, on website.

Within a sentence, secondary stress positions can be formed by the appearance of a properly used colon or semicolon; by grammatical convention, the material preceding these punctuation marks must be able to stand by itself as a complete sentence. Thus, sentences can be extended effortlessly to dozens of words, as long as there is a medial syntactic closure for every piece of new, stress-worthy information along the way. …

By using a semicolon, we created a second stress position to accommodate a second piece of information that seemed to require emphasis.

We now have three rhetorical principles based on reader expectations: First, grammatical subjects should be followed as soon as possible by their verbs; second, every unit of discourse, no matter the size, should serve a single function or make a single point; and, third, information intended to be emphasized should appear at points of syntactic closure. Using these principles, we can begin to unravel the problems of our example prose.

The information that begins a sentence establishes for the reader a perspective for viewing the sentence as a unit. …

The Topic Position
To summarize the principles connected with the stress position, we have the proverbial wisdom, “Save the best for last.” To summarize the principles connected with the other end of the sentence, which we will call the topic position, we have its proverbial contradiction, “First things first.” In the stress position the reader needs and expects closure and fulfillment; in the topic position the reader needs and expects perspective and context. With so much of reading comprehension affected by what shows up in the topic position, it behooves a writer to control what appears at the beginning of sentences with great care.