



VANCOUVER ISLAND
UNIVERSITY

RoboHelp

Welcome

Welcome to the online “Robohelp” course offered by Vancouver Island University. Have fun with it. If this is your first on-line class experience, be prepared for an entirely new type of learning and a different way of communicating with your classmates.



Julie Clarke has an extensive background in computers and computer software, having spent a large part of her working career programming, developing, and maintaining computer software and hardware of all types. Currently responsible for Continuing Studies co-ordination for VIU’s Powell River Campus, she has also taken on responsibility for online courses for several of the college’s campuses.

With a Masters in Business from the University of Toronto, she is in touch with both the day-to-day functioning of a wide variety of computer software as well as the large picture of how software can be an invaluable tool in Technical Writing applications. Julie is keen to share her knowledge of computers and software!

Getting Started

Spend some time getting to know your online classroom. If you’d like more practice and information, be sure to check out the Free Online Learner Orientation (FOLO). Link to www.pr.viu.ca/folo.pdf for instructions on accessing the FOLO course.

Our Moodle Classroom

Our Moodle space is our online classroom. Here you'll find the following:

News Forum - The news forum is a general discussion forum used for the delivery of class news and events. Check here for any date changes or news of general class interest.

Course Syllabus - You are currently reading the Course Syllabus. It will be posted in your online classroom to give you an overview of the online classroom setup and the week-by-week schedule for your class.

Water Cooler - The Water Cooler is a discussion area used for non-course-related topics.

Lessons - delivered as html files and/or pdfs, these should be easily viewable. If you have any problems, please let the instructor or administrator know.

Additional Reading - Over time students have asked for additional reading or expansion on certain topics. Please read this material if it is of interest to you, or if it is a required reading assigned by your instructor.

Web Page Links/Resources - Related Links. Visit them for even more information.

Assignment and posting of assignment instructions - The Assignment area is where you will upload your completed assignments. If more than one file is required, you will need to zip them before uploading.

Sample files - There may be sample files included related to your weekly lesson or assignment.

Discussions - Be sure to visit the Discussion area for each week's lesson. Topics will be posted for each week's lesson. You will be expected (as part of your grading for the course) to contribute. For more information on what's expected here, see the 'Grading' area below.

Course description	Course Title:	RoboHelp
	Session:	Fall 2006
	Instructor Contact Info:	Julie Clarke via email only using Moodle class email.
	Technical Support:	Online Development Team, Vancouver Island University, Nanaimo. Email: online@viu.ca .
	Administrative Support:	Julie Clarke, Vancouver Island University, Powell River. Email: clarkej@viu.ca . Telephone (toll-free) 877-888-8890 or 604-485-8032

RoboHelp is required by over 50% of posted Technical Communication jobs, and is a vital tool for technical writers who are involved in creating web-based and desktop help systems. The first part of this course is spent planning the help system--everything from logical progression through creating a Table of Contents to Indexing. The second part of the course is spent on hands-on usage of RoboHelp and completing the final project for the course.

Text & materials

No required text. The instructor will provide a lesson and a list of web resources for each topic. Students will be instructed on how to download the free RoboHelp trial version available from www.adobe.com to perform various assignments and learn about the software.

Goals & objectives

- 1) To introduce students to RoboHelp software and how it can be used in the world of technical communication.
- 2) To train students in the creation of online help systems, both from a design and software perspective.
- 3) To instruct students in the various capabilities of RoboHelp software for online documentation.
- 4) To prepare students for further study into more advanced options available from RoboHelp.

Grading criteria & components of a grade

Each student will be graded by earning points for class participation, for assignments, and for the final examination. Grades will be assigned as follows:

97 - 100 points = A+

93 - 96 points = A

90 - 92 points = A-

87 - 89 points = B+

83 - 86 points = B

80 - 82 points = B-

77 - 79 points = C+

73 - 76 points = C

70 - 72 points = C-

65 - 69 points = D

Less than 65 points = Fail

Point distribution

Participation in class discussions: 40 points possible

Students should participate in class discussion by posting their comments or questions and by responding to at least one other classmate each week. The instructor expects each student to contribute at least one thoughtful, quality posting per week (including the response to a classmate). Just logging on and reading other people's postings is not considered participation, nor is mere agreement with others' postings.

Quality of participation is more important than their sheer frequency, length or grammatical form. Quality includes, but is not limited to:

- a) commentary on the lesson for the current topic;
- b) detailed sharing of a student's experience or research relative to the week's topic;
- c) opinions on the topic that are backed with compelling facts and reasoning;
- d) raising questions that help the class better understand the topic, particularly by proposing; and explaining implications that might have been overlooked in the lesson, or in previous discussion.

Quality participation also means conveying your experience, research, opinions, questions or commentary in a professional manner. Comments on other students' postings is an important part of the learning process. Such comments must be made in a respectful and constructive manner. Disagreements among discussion participants are expected and often valuable, but they should be expressed tactfully, not in a confrontational tone.

Point distribution... cont'd

Assignments: 20 points possible

Points per assignment are listed in the Course Schedule, below. Assignment instructions will be found at the bottom of each weekly outline. Completed assignments should be posted in the Assignments area as described in the instructions. Please do not send completed assignments to the instructor's email box. Use either pdf (Acrobat Reader format), html (save as web page), rtf (save as rich text format) as the format for your completed assignments, unless otherwise noted in the assignment instructions. Other formats may also work, but check with the instructor prior to submitting. Some formats do not work well (Word documents) as they do not transfer well to other computers and are best saved as pdfs.

Late assignments will automatically have one point subtracted for each day late, unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor for late submission due to extenuating circumstances.

Final examination/ Assignment: 40 points possible

Instructions for the Final Exam/ assignment will be posted in the Week 8 lesson, are to be submitted through the Final Exam Assignment area

Final grade in class

Your unofficial grade in the class will be available to you no later than one week after the class ends, either posted in the 'Grades' area on your course site or emailed to you directly by the instructor.

Feedback schedule

The instructor will post general feedback on the assignments in the appropriate discussion forum, and specific feedback and points awarded on graded assignments will be posted in My Grades within one week of the due date for that work, unless otherwise noted in the assignment instructions. Late submissions may take longer. Students should check under 'My Grades' for feedback and points awarded for each assignment.

The instructor does not normally participate in real-time chat discussions, but students are welcome to use this feature on their own.

The instructor normally logs onto the course discussion forums at least once daily, Monday through Friday. Exceptions are the instructor's travel or sick days, which may be posted as an announcement on the Homepage.

The instructor's office hours are anytime Monday through Friday via Moodle email.

Student conduct

Vancouver Island University students are expected to behave in a responsible manner respectful of the learning environment inside the classroom, whether attending in person or online. This policy applies to all Vancouver Island University campus and off-campus locations where Vancouver Island University sponsored activity is occurring. For further information, link to Vancouver Island University's Student Conduct Code pages.

Course topics & assignments outline

Week 1:

Topic: Online Help Systems - Introduction

What are online help systems? Who develops them and who uses them? Why do I need to know about this software? We'll answer these types of questions and look into the evolution of RoboHelp to gain an understanding of the unique properties of this software and its potential uses.

Assignment: Start 'Planning Your System' (20 pts for wks 1 & 2 combined)

Discussion thread: Introduce yourself in the Week One discussion thread.

Week 2:

Topic: Online Help Design Issues

In week two we examine basic design issues inherent in developing online help systems. We look at logic, consistency, and flow issues, and examine what works and what doesn't work when guiding users through the help function.

Assignment : Complete 'Planning Your System' (20 pts for wks 1 & 2 comb)

Discussion thread: Best examples and worst examples of help systems - what do you like to see?

Week 3:

Topic: RoboHelp - Basic Functionality

This week we download and start working with the 15-day trial version of RoboHelp. We learn the basic Robohelp windows, what they are used for, and start working on our RoboHelp project.

Assignment: Start RoboHelp final project (40 pts for wks 3 & 4 combined)

Discussion thread: RoboHelp Resources

Week 4:

Topic: RoboHelp - Table of Contents & Index

This week we concentrate on Table of Contents and Index creation using RoboHelp. We learn about cross-referencing and keywords, as well as interactive features available within RoboHelp that can add interest and increased help information for the user. We also look at Indexing - what needs to be included, and how, and what can be left out.

Assignment: Complete RoboHelp final project (40 pts for wks 3 & 4 comb)

Discussion thread: Tips and Tricks