

Chemistry 9507R Course Outline

1. Course Information

Course Information

Chemistry 9507R – Fridays from 2:30 – 5:00 pm November 1 to December 6

List of Prerequisites

This course is open to graduate students in Chemistry.

Description

Effective written communication will be required throughout your career to ensure the impact of your work. This communication will occur in the form of technical reports and manuscripts, patents, grant and scholarship proposals, conference abstracts, and other professional correspondence. This course is designed to enhance your ability to effectively communicate in these different contexts by introducing you to effective written communication skills and to feedback strategies that will enable you to also help improve the work of your coworkers. Assignments will make use of your past or present research data and peer-to-peer feedback to translate the course material into practical use.

2. Instructor Information

Instructor	Email	Office	Phone	Office Hours
Dr. Elizabeth Gillies	egillie@uwo.ca		519-661-2111 x 80223	By appointment

Students must use their Western (@uwo.ca) email addresses when contacting their instructors.

3. Course Syllabus, Schedule, Delivery Mode

Course outline

1. Giving and receiving effective feedback
2. Key principles of effective communication
3. Effective strategies and steps for preparing written documents
4. Applications of written communication strategies – scientific manuscripts, theses, abstracts
5. Strategies for preparing research proposals

6. Preparation of effective figures and graphical displays

Class schedule:

Week	Topic	Deliverable
1 (Nov 1)	Introductions, Giving and receiving feedback, communication fundamentals	
2 (Nov 8)	Part 1 of Written documents -Abstract assignment given	
3 (Nov 15)	Part 2 of Written documents and -Abstract peer review exercise	Bring abstract draft and participate in peer review
4 (Nov 22)	Applications of written document principles (manuscripts, theses) -Written elements assignment	Hand in final abstract
5 (Nov 29)	Effective graphical displays -Peer review of writing assignment	Bring written elements draft for peer review
6 (Dec 6)	Research proposals, email, posters	Written elements assignment due
7 (Dec 13)		Research proposal due

4. Course Materials

There is no required textbook. Course notes and electronic supplements will be provided during the course. The following can serve as useful references but are not required:

- Trees, Maps, and Theorems. Effective Communication for Rational Minds, Jean-Luc Doumont, Principiae
- The Craft of Scientific Writing, M. Alley, Prentice-Hall.

All course material will be posted to OWL: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/>) regularly for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

If students need assistance with the course OWL site, they can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

5. Methods of Evaluation

Grading Scheme and Assessment Dates

The overall course grade will be calculated as listed below:

Attendance and participation in peer review activities:	25%
Abstract assignment	15%
Elements of a scientific manuscript	30%
Short research proposal	30%

Relevant dates are provided in section 3 above.

General information about missed coursework

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, you must provide valid medical or other supporting documentation to your instructor immediately. It is the student's responsibility to make alternative arrangements with their instructor once the accommodation has been approved and the instructor has been informed.

Without a valid reason, late assignments will be penalized 10% per day. Arriving for the peer review activity without an assignment draft to participate with will result in a penalty of 5% (i.e., 5 of the 25 points) from the attendance and participation in peer review activities mark.

6. Additional Statements

Religious Accommodation

When conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request an accommodation for their absence in writing to the course instructor and/or the Academic Advising office of their Faculty of Registration. This notice should be made as early as possible but not later than two weeks prior to the writing or the examination (or one week prior to the writing of the test).

Please visit the Diversity Calendars posted on our university's EDID website for the recognized religious holidays:

<https://www.edi.uwo.ca>.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Accessible Education, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities can be found at:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Accommodation_disabilities.pdf.

Academic Policies

The website for Registrar Services is <https://www.registrar.uwo.ca/>.

In accordance with policy,

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp113.pdf,

the centrally administered e-mail account provided to students will be considered the individual's official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at their official university address is attended to in a timely manner.

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Artificial intelligence

The use of generative AI in this course is not permitted for any purposes other than correcting English spelling and grammar. Any use of software or tools other than Microsoft Word for editing spelling and grammar should be disclosed by using a note at the end of your assignment. You must take responsibility for any edits suggested by this software that may not align with the principles emphasized in the course with respect to sentence structure and general writing style, which may therefore result in mark deductions.

Note that your research in the Chemistry Department (and prior research performed before your graduate studies at Western) likely involves confidential and proprietary information, so it should not be submitted to AI chatbots such as ChatGPT, Gemini Advanced, or Anthropic Claude 3 without the express consent of your research supervisor(s). Microsoft Copilot is included in Western's institutional license with Microsoft. **When logged in with your Western credentials**, any data input into Copilot receives the same protections as Outlook, OneDrive and enterprise Microsoft products. For more information on Western Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies AI policies, please refer to the following website:

https://grad.uwo.ca/about_us/policies_procedures_regulations/ai.html

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html.

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Please contact the course instructor if you require lecture or printed material in an alternate format or if any other arrangements can make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Accessible Education at

http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html

if you have any questions regarding accommodations.

Learning-skills counsellors at Learning Development and Success (<https://learning.uwo.ca>) are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.