SUBJECT TO CHANGE
Western University
School of Health Studies

Health Sciences 3910G (Winter 2020)
Fundamentals of Academic Communication in the Health Sciences
(“Academic Health Communication”)

Course Outline

Instructor: Shauna Burke, PhD
Email: sburke9@uwo.ca
Class time: Tuesdays 10:30am – 1:30pm
Class location: UCC 41
Office Hour: Wednesdays 12:00pm – 1:00pm (HSB 337)

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<tr>
<th>Teaching Assistant (TA)</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
<th>Office Hours</th>
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A. Course Description
The objective of this course is to have students gain an understanding of and practical experience related to the skills and knowledge required to effectively communicate health-related research to various audiences. In order to accomplish this, students will be introduced to a variety of practices in communicating health information in both academic and applied settings. Topics include (but are not limited to) an introduction to knowledge translation, critical appraisal in evidence-based practice, effective writing and presenting skills, poster and infographic presentations, stakeholder and community engagement, and the practice of preparing brief but informative speeches. This course is strongly recommended for students considering practica or independent study courses in the future, and is geared toward students who are considering graduate school. The course is an essay course.

There may be some occasions in which the final hour of class (Tuesdays 12:30pm – 1:30pm) will be allotted to partner or small group work. We will NOT meet as a group on these occasions, however students are responsible for meeting with their partner or group during this time to work on class assignments, presentations, and/or papers.

As part of a successful undergraduate experience at Western, we encourage you to make your health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on-campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students receive membership in Western’s Campus Recreation Centre as part of their registration fees. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Please check out the Faculty of Music web page (http://www.music.uwo.ca/), or the McIntosh Gallery (http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/). Further information regarding health and wellness-related services available to students may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/. If you are in emotional or mental distress, please visit Western Psychological Services (https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html) for a list of options about how to obtain help. To help you learn more about mental health, Western has developed an interactive mental health learning module, found here: https://www.uwo.ca/health/wec/education/learning.html.
B. Course Objectives
1. To develop and enhance students’ understanding of and skills related to effective academic communication in the health sciences.
2. To foster an understanding of the role of research evidence and the importance of knowledge translation in health sciences via the development of scientific writing and presentation skills.
3. To provide students with opportunities to learn about and practice the fundamentals of academic communication in the health sciences via readings, scientific writing, presentations, and practical (experiential) knowledge translation and communication activities.

An additional goal of HS 3910G is to provide students with an opportunity to practice and enhance personal and professional development skills. More specifically, students will learn and/or develop:
- Tools and strategies for effective communication, including professionalism and etiquette
- Knowledge and experience related to creating and maintaining an academic CV
- Insights and strategies related to the development of successful scholarship, graduate school, and professional/job applications

C. Optional Text and Readings

Students will be assigned several readings throughout the duration of the course. These readings correspond to the lecture topics and will be identified prior to each lecture. A complete reading list will be posted on the first day of class. You will be asked to: (a) locate and print/save the article using the full reference provided on the course outline; or (b) access the link or digital copy posted on OWL. Additional readings may be assigned and/or posted on the course website at any time. Students are responsible for the content of all required readings.

D. Evaluation/Assessment (detailed evaluation information including marking schemes to be provided)
- Class Attendance and Participation (12.5%)
- Tutorial #1 (2.5%) Due Jan 21 (Partner/Group)
- Tutorial #2 (2.5%) Due Jan 28 (Individual)
- Tutorial #3 (2.5%) Due Mar 17 (Individual)
- Dissemination Plan Report (20%) Due Feb 14 (Partner/Group)
- Dissemination Plan Presentations (10%) Feb 25 (Partner/Group)
- Evidence-Based Poster, Brief Report, or Infographic (15%) Due Mar 10 (Individual)
- “Lightning Talk” presentations (15%) Mar 24, Mar 31 (Individual)
- Final Paper (20%) Due Mar 31 (Individual)

Attendance and Participation: In the School of Health Studies, each course instructor sets specific expectations for attendance and participation that are specific to the course, teaching objectives, and learning outcomes. Regular attendance is expected and essential for all courses, but particularly those that include participation grades in their evaluation schemes. Participation means not only attendance, but active engagement in the class, including (for example) contribution to small and large group discussions, a demonstrated effort to prepare for class by completing assigned readings before class, and following the instructor’s guidelines for use of electronic devices during class time. Students who miss classes, or parts of classes, are responsible for the material they have missed. Instructors are not obliged to review the contents of missed lectures. Persistent absenteeism may have serious repercussions, and may result in you failing this course. In this course, the equivalent of 3 weeks of unexcused absences, per term, will be considered to be persistent absenteeism. Persistent absenteeism will result in you being contacted by the instructor, who may request a meeting. Continued absence after this point will be reported to the Undergraduate Chair, and may result in debarment from submitting the final course paper. In such a case, you would receive a grade of zero on the evaluations from which you were debarred.
**Lateness:** Hard copies of all assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. All late assignments/papers will receive an automatic 5% deduction if not handed in by the end of class on the assigned due date and a subsequent 5% deducted for every 24-hour period after the due date. **Missed presentations will also result in a 5% deduction for every 24-hour period after the originally scheduled presentation date.**

### E. Course Agenda (*subject to change prior to and throughout the course, as needed*)

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
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| **Week 1**  
Jan 7, 2020 | **WELCOME**  
- Course overview and expectations  
- Introduction to the fundamentals and importance of academic communication in the health sciences  
- Introduction to knowledge translation |
| **Week 2**  
Jan 14, 2020 | **FOUNDATIONS IN SCHOLARLY WRITING AND RESEARCH**  
- The nature of research  
- Generation of an evidence-based research question  
- Ethical guidelines and American Psychological Association (APA) formatting  
- Overview of Tutorial #1 |
| **Week 3**  
Jan 21, 2020 | **FOUNDATIONS IN SCHOLARLY WRITING AND RESEARCH (cont’d)**  
- The art of scientific writing  
- The publication process  
- Overview of Tutorial #2  
- **Tutorial #1 Due (Dissemination paper topic; Partner/Group)** |
| **Week 4**  
Jan 28, 2020 | **KNOWLEDGE CREATION AND SYNTHESIS**  
- Database searching  
- Systematic/scoping reviews and meta-analyses  
- **Tutorial #2 Due (Final paper topic; Individual)** |
| **Week 5**  
Feb 4, 2020 | **ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION IN THE HEALTH SCIENCES: PRESENTATION SKILLS SEMINAR**  
- Introduction and interactive training  
- Overview of conference presentations, poster/infographic presentations, lightning presentations |
| **Week 6**  
Feb 11, 2020 | **KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION: RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE**  
- Identifying the audience  
- Dissemination activities  
- Stakeholders and community partnerships  
- **Dissemination Plan Reports Due Friday February 14, 2020** |
| **Reading Week** (Feb 17-21, 2020) |  |
| **Week 7**  
Feb 25, 2020 | **KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION: RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE (cont’d)**  
- **Dissemination Plan Presentations (Partner/Group)**  
- Peer discussions and feedback/evaluations |
| Week 8 | Mar 3, 2020 | COMMUNICATION WITH COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS  
• Professionalism, etiquette, and tools estratégias for effective communication and the creation/maintenance of community partnerships  
• Community stakeholder engagement event preparation—class invitations to community members/organizations, community engagement session planning |
|---|---|---|
| Week 9 | Mar 10, 2020 | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: COMMUNICATING “YOU”  
• Academic CV building workshop  
• Scholarship, graduate school, and professional applications  
• Overview of Tutorial #3  
• Evidence-Based Poster, Brief Report, or Infographic Due |
| Week 10 | Mar 17, 2020 | CRITICAL APPRAISAL IN EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE  
• Critical appraisal of the methods and designs used in health research  
• Introduction to reporting and evaluation frameworks, tools, and checklists used in the health sciences  
• Review of Introduction and Methods sections (final paper preparation and review)  
• Tutorial #3 Due (CV; Individual) |
| Week 11 | Mar 24, 2020 | KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENT  
• Brief Knowledge Transfer: Lightning Talks (3-Minute Presentations) |
| Week 12 | Mar 31, 2020 | KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENT  
• Brief Knowledge Transfer: Lightning Talks (3-Minute Presentations)  
• Final Papers Due |

**General Course Policies and Procedures**

**Grade Policy**

The university-wide descriptor of the meaning of letter grades, as approved by Senate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>Superior work that is clearly above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>Good work, meeting all requirements and eminently satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>Competent work, meeting requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>Fair work, minimally acceptable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 50</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
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It is expected that the grades for this course will fall between 74% and 78%. In the event that the course average falls outside this range, a constant may be added (or subtracted) from each student’s grade, by the instructor, to bring the class average in line with school policy.

**Prerequisites**

Registration in the third or fourth year of the School of Health Studies, or the Honors Specialization in Global Health Studies at Huron University College. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.
Rounding of Grades
These are practices some students request. These practices will not occur in this course. The edges of this course are clear and sharp. The mark attained is the mark you achieved and the mark assigned; there is no rounding to the next grade level, and there is no re-weighting of assignments. Please do not ask me to do this for you. It degrades my experience as your professor and your experience as a student. We both have an appreciation of high standards.

Course Website (OWL)
All students in this course need to use OWL to access resources used in this course such as PowerPoint (lecture) handouts, additional handouts and/or readings, and this course outline. Students are responsible to check the OWL site regularly for this course for updates and announcements. Additionally, due to changes in privacy legislation, grades will only be provided to you through the course website – I will not, under any circumstance, convey grades via email or over the phone.

OWL is an electronic shared space that will be used frequently throughout the course for a variety of purposes. Please interact respectfully on this shared e-space. The privilege of contributing to the site can be revoked if deemed necessary.

E-mail
The course TA and myself will do our best to answer all course-related questions sent via e-mail within a reasonable timeframe, but please keep in mind that e-mails are not typically sent or replied to on weekends or outside of working hours—8am to 5pm—on weekdays. Please limit your e-mail questions to administrative matters only. Questions on course content will not typically be answered, as they should be: (a) raised during class time, or (b) asked during office hours or scheduled meetings with myself or the TA. Please note that you must use your UWO email address for all correspondence regarding this course.

Lecture Attendance
Students are expected to: (a) attend all classes; and (b) participate actively in each class through informed discussions.

Electronic Devices
During Exams: Unless you have medical accommodations that require you to do so, or explicit permission from the instructor of the course, you may not use any electronic devices during ANY tests, quizzes, midterms, examinations, or other in-class evaluations.

During Lectures and Tutorials: Although you are welcome to use a computer during lecture and tutorial periods, you are expected to use the computer for scholastic purposes only, and refrain from engaging in any activities that may distract other students from learning. From time to time, your professor may ask the class to turn off all computers, to facilitate learning or discussion of the material presented in a particular class. Unless explicitly noted otherwise, you may not make audio or video recordings of lectures – nor may you edit, re-use, distribute, or re-broadcast any of the material posted to the course website. The use of cell phones and other electronic devices to take pictures of the instructor or lecture material is strictly prohibited in this course. Please ensure that all cellphones or other communication devices are turned off or have their ringers silenced during lectures. Students may be asked to turn off such equipment or to leave the classroom if their activities are disruptive to the instructor and/or other students.
Use of Laptops During Class
As noted above, the use of laptops is permitted for use in the classroom for note-taking purposes only. Students may be asked to close laptops at various times throughout the course, or to leave the classroom if their laptop activities are disruptive to the instructor and/or other students.

Use of Recording Devices and Cameras During Class
Again, you do not have my permission to make audio or video recordings of lectures, or to take pictures of lecture material.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

Student Code of Conduct
The purpose of the Code of Student Conduct is to define the general standard of conduct expected of students registered at The University of Western Ontario, provide examples of behaviour that constitutes a breach of this standard of conduct, provide examples of sanctions that may be imposed, and set out the disciplinary procedures that the University will follow. For more information, visit http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/board/code.pdf.

Academic Consideration
The University recognizes that a student’s ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by extenuating circumstances, including short-term illness or injury. Reasonable academic consideration is a cooperative process between the University, the student, and academic staff. All participants in the process must act in good faith, and fulfil their respective obligations, if it is to succeed.

Students who experience an extenuating circumstance (illness, injury, or other extenuating circumstance) sufficiently significant as to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements, may submit a request for academic consideration through the following routes:

(i) Submitting a Self-Reported Absence form, provided that the conditions for submission are met;
(ii) For medical absences, submitting a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner, in order to be eligible for Academic Consideration; or
(iii) For non-medical absences, submitting appropriate documentation (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of registration, in order to be eligible for academic consideration.

Students seeking academic consideration:

• Are advised to consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying handing in work;
• Are encouraged to make appropriate decisions, based on their specific circumstances, recognizing that minor ailments (e.g., upset stomach) or upsets (e.g., argument with a friend) are not normally an appropriate basis for a self-reported absence;
• Must communicate with their instructors no later than 24 hours after the end of the period covered by either the self-reported absence or SMC, or immediately upon their return following a documented absence;
• Are advised that all necessary documentation, forms, etc. are to be submitted to academic counselling within two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities
Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance (48 hours or less) that is sufficiently severe as to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements (e.g., attending lectures or labs, writing tests or midterm exams, completing and submitting assignments, participating in presentations) should self-declare using the online Self-Reported Absence portal. This option should be used in situations where the student expects to resume academic responsibilities within 48 hours or less. The following conditions are in place for self-reporting of medical or extenuating circumstances:

a. Students will be allowed a maximum of two self-reported absences between September and April, and one self-reported absence between May and August;

b. The duration of the excused absence will be for a maximum of 48 hours from the time the Self-Reported Absence form is completed through the online portal, or from 8:30am the following morning if the form is submitted after 4:30pm;

c. The duration of the excused absence will terminate prior to the end of the 48 hour period, should the student undertake significant academic responsibilities (e.g., write a test, submit a paper) during that time;

d. The duration of an excused absence will terminate at 8:30am on the day following the last day of classes each semester, regardless of how many days of absence have elapsed;

e. Self-reported absences will not be allowed for scheduled final examinations; for midterm examinations scheduled during the December examination period; or for final lab examinations (i.e., “bellringers”);

f. Self-reporting may not be used for assessments (e.g., midterm exams, tests, reports, presentations, or essays) worth more than 30% of any given course;

g. Students must be in touch with their instructors no later than 24 hours after the end of the period covered by the Self-Reported Absence form, to clarify how they will be expected to fulfil the academic expectations they may have missed.

Scholastic Offences

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 website: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Additionally, 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).

Support Services

There are various support services around campus and these include, but are not limited to:

1. Student Development Centre -- http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/
2. Student Health -- http://www.shs.uwo.ca/student/studenthealthservices.html
3. Registrar’s Office -- http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/
4. Ombuds Office -- http://www.uwo.ca/ombuds/