

**SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

Western University  
School of Health Studies

**Health Sciences 3910G (Winter 2021)  
Fundamentals of Academic Communication in  
the Health Sciences  
("Academic Health Communication")**

Course Outline

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January 2021

**Online Course Format:**

Two-Hour Lecture Posted Online Each Week (Asynchronous)

"Power Hour" Online Sessions: Tuesdays 11:30am – 12:30pm (Synchronous)\*

*\*some times/durations vary; please see detailed schedule below*

**Course Instructor:**

Dr. Shauna Burke ([sburke9@uwo.ca](mailto:sburke9@uwo.ca))

Online Office Hour: Tuesdays 1pm – 2pm

Teaching Assistant (TA)	E-mail	Online Office Hours
Jesse Singh	<a href="mailto:jsing374@uwo.ca">jsing374@uwo.ca</a>	Wednesdays 12pm – 2pm
Arman Hassanpour	<a href="mailto:ahassanp@uwo.ca">ahassanp@uwo.ca</a>	Mondays 2pm – 4pm

**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 taking practica and/or independent study courses in the future, and is geared toward students who are considering graduate school. The course is an essay course.

*As part of a successful undergraduate experience at Western, we encourage you to make health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on-campus and online health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and wellness while pursuing your degree. Further information regarding the services available to students may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>. For information regarding emotional or mental distress, please visit Western Psychological Services (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>) or Thames Valley Family Services (<https://www.family servicethamesvalley.com/>), a trusted provider within the community. To 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>. Students are also encouraged to access local health and wellness resources within their home communities.*

## 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 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 and professional communication
- ✓ 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

*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2019, Seventh Edition). American Psychological Association.

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. All readings will be 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)

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| • Online "Power Hour" Attendance and Participation (10%)  | <b>Ongoing</b>                                   |
| • Learning Activity – Final Paper Introduction Outline (5%)   | <b>Due Date:</b> February 2 (Individual)         |
| • Dissemination Plan Report (15%)   | <b>Due Date:</b> February 23 (Group)             |
| • Dissemination Product (e.g., Evidence-Based Poster, Brief Report, Video Animation, Infographic, etc.) (15%) | <b>Due Date:</b> March 2 (Group)                 |
| • "Lightning Talk" (Synchronous) Presentation (20%)   | <b>Due Date:</b> March 16 – April 6 (Individual) |
| • Final Paper – Scoping or Systematic Review (35%)  | <b>Due Date:</b> April 6 (Individual)            |

**"Power Hour" (Online) 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 attending the online sessions, but active engagement in them, including (for example) contributing meaningfully to group discussions, and a demonstrated effort to prepare by completing assigned readings and following the instructor's guidelines. Students who miss online sessions, or parts of them, are responsible for the material they have missed. Instructors are not obliged to review the contents of missed online sessions or 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 an online 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:** All late assignments/papers/presentations will receive an automatic 5% deduction if not submitted by or presented on the assigned due date and a subsequent 5% deducted for every 24-hour period after the due date.

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

Week	Topic(s)
<b>Week 1</b> (Jan 12)	WELCOME <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course overview and expectations</li> <li>• Introduction to the fundamentals and importance of academic communication in the health sciences</li> <li>• Introduction to knowledge translation</li> <li>• <b>Online power hour #1: Tuesday January 12 (11:30am – 12:30pm)</b></li> </ul>
<b>Week 2</b> (Jan 19)	FOUNDATIONS IN SCHOLARLY WRITING AND RESEARCH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nature of research</li> <li>• Generation of an evidence-based research question</li> <li>• Ethical guidelines and American Psychological Association (APA) formatting</li> <li>• <b>Online power hour #2: Tuesday January 19 (11:30am – 12:30pm)</b></li> </ul>
<b>Week 3</b> (Jan 26)	FOUNDATIONS IN SCHOLARLY WRITING AND RESEARCH (cont'd) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The art of scientific writing</li> <li>• The publication process</li> <li>• Overview of Learning Activity – Outline of final paper Introduction (due February 2)</li> <li>• <b>Online power hour #3: Tuesday January 26 (11:30am – 12:30pm)</b> <b>[Review of dissemination plan report and presentation]</b></li> </ul>
<b>Week 4</b> (Feb 2)	ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION IN THE HEALTH SCIENCES: PRESENTATION SKILLS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction and interactive presentation skills training (synchronous session only)</li> <li>• <u>Learning Activity (Outline) due</u> (Individual)</li> <li>• <b>Online power hour #4: Tuesday February 2 (*11:30am – 1:30pm)</b> <b>[2-hour synchronous Zoom session with Dr. Melanie-Anne Atkins, Acting Associate Director, Graduate Education, Centre for Teaching and Learning]</b></li> </ul>
<b>Week 5</b> (Feb 9)	KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION: RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying the audience</li> <li>• Stakeholders and community partnerships</li> <li>• Review of dissemination plan report and product expectations and guidelines</li> <li>• <b>Online power hour #5: Tuesday February 9 (11:30am – 12:30pm)</b> <b>[Lisa Metselaar, Experiential Learning and Placement Coordinator, School of Health Studies &amp; School of Kinesiology]</b></li> </ul>
<b>READING WEEK (Feb 15-19)</b>	

<b>Week 6</b> (Feb 23)	<b>KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION: RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE (cont'd)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethical considerations and guidelines</li> <li>Academic conference presentations (i.e., verbal and poster presentations)</li> <li>Other scholarly dissemination activities (e.g., infographics, virtual presentations, etc.)</li> <li><u>Dissemination Plan Report due</u> (Group)</li> <li><b>Online power hour #6: Tuesday February 23 (11:30am – 12:30pm)</b></li> </ul>
<b>Week 7</b> (March 2)	<b>COMMUNICATION WITH RESEARCH TEAMS, PARTNERS, &amp; COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professionalism &amp; etiquette</li> <li>Tools/strategies for effective communication and the creation/maintenance of research and community partnerships</li> <li><u>Dissemination Product due</u> (Group)</li> <li><b>Online power hour #7: Tuesday March 2 (11:30am – 12:30pm)</b> <i>[Lisa Metselaar, Experiential Learning and Placement Coordinator, School of Health Studies &amp; School of Kinesiology]</i></li> </ul>
<b>Week 8</b> (March 9)	<b>BRIEF KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER &amp; SCIENTIFIC MANUSCRIPTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction to brief reports and presentations</li> <li>Overview of the scientific manuscript</li> <li>Review of lightning talk and final paper expectations and guidelines</li> <li><b>Online power hour #8: Tuesday March 9 (11:30am – 12:30pm)</b></li> </ul>
<b>Week 9</b> (March 16)	<b>KNOWLEDGE CREATION AND SYNTHESIS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Database searching</li> <li>Systematic/scoping reviews and meta-analyses</li> <li><b>Online power hour #9: Tuesday March 16 (11:30am – 12:30pm)</b> <i>[Lightning Talks (3-Minute Presentations x 15; Individual)]</i> <i>*Peer evaluations</i></li> </ul>
<b>Week 10</b> (March 23)	<b>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: COMMUNICATING “YOU”</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scholarship, graduate school, and professional applications</li> <li>Resumes and CVs</li> <li>Learning Activity (CV) – submission and feedback optional</li> <li><b>Online power hour #10: Tuesday March 23 (11:30am – 12:30pm)</b> <i>[Lightning Talks (3-Minute Presentations x 15; Individual)]</i> <i>*Peer evaluations</i></li> </ul>
<b>Week 11</b> (March 30)	<b>FINAL PAPER PREPARATION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual work on final paper</li> <li><b>Online power hour #11: Tuesday March 30 (11:30am – 12:30pm)</b> <i>[Lightning Talks (3-Minute Presentations x 15; Individual)]</i> <i>*Peer evaluations</i></li> </ul>
<b>Week 12</b> (April 6)	<b>FINAL PAPER/LIGHTNING TALK PRESENTATIONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Final Papers Due</u>: April 6, 2020</li> <li><b>Online power hour #12: Tuesday April 6 (11:30am – 12:30pm)</b> <i>[Lightning Talks (3-Minute Presentations x 15; Individual)]</i> <i>*Peer evaluations</i></li> </ul>

## General Course Policies and Procedures

### Grade Policy

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

A+	90-100	<i>One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level</i>
A	80-89	<i>Superior work that is clearly above average</i>
B	70-79	<i>Good work, meeting all requirements and eminently satisfactory</i>
C	60-69	<i>Competent work, meeting requirements</i>
D	50-59	<i>Fair work, minimally acceptable.</i>
F	below 50	<i>Fail</i>

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, 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 tutorials, or (b) asked during online office hours or scheduled online meetings with myself or the TA. **Please note that you must use your UWO email address for all correspondence regarding this course.**

## Learning Environment

This course experience will function according to the assumption that successful learning happens in environments where learning is co-created by the instructor and the students. As the course instructor, I will endeavour to provide students with course experiences that are optimally engaging, motivating, and interesting. In return, I expect students to contribute to the collaborative nature of the learning experience through active participation in discussions, by completing the assigned readings, and by offering constructive feedback as will be deemed useful to the overall learning experience.

Ideally, I will co-create an online learning environment that welcomes and encourages group dialogues that are dynamic, passionate, and open-minded. That is, a learning experience that is vital and engaging for all. In this regard, it is my hope that we will come together in the spirit of community and shared interest to co-create a learning environment that is supported by civility and mutual respect. In doing so, we will set the stage for a healthy and stimulating intellectual forum.

If you are having problems with any aspect of the course, please contact me, your instructor. I am genuinely committed to your learning experience, I am approachable, and I welcome your comments, constructive criticisms and, of course, your questions.

## Use of 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 evaluations.

Using any electronic device to take pictures of the instructors or lecture material is **strictly prohibited** in this course. When engaged in online lectures/tutorials/discussions, please ensure that all cellphones or other communication devices are turned off or have their ringers silenced.

## Use of Recording Devices and Course Content

Course instructors own and retain the intellectual property rights of their teaching materials. These rights extend to materials used in online settings and digital learning management systems like OWL, Zoom, and TopHat. Students do not have my permission to make audio or video recordings of lectures, take pictures of lecture material, or distribute any course content for nefarious purposes (e.g., for sale or to cheat on exams). It is the decision of the instructor as to how and when teaching materials can be shared or used. ***Unless explicitly noted otherwise, you may not make audio or video recordings of pre-recorded lectures or other course materials. Nor may you edit, re-use, distribute, or re-broadcast any of the material posted to the course website.***

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## **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](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/>
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/>