

Western University
School of Health Studies

**Health Sciences 3910G (Winter 2022)
Fundamentals of Academic Communication in
the Health Sciences
(“Academic Health Communication”)**

Course Outline
SUBJECT TO CHANGE

January 2023

**Please note: All listed times are EST*

Course Format:

Asynchronous Lecture Posted Online (on OWL) Each Week

Synchronous Tutorials (In Person and/or Online): Tuesdays 1:30pm – 2:30pm PA&B 34

**some times/durations will vary; please see (tentative) schedule below*

Course Instructor:

Dr. Shauna Burke

Associate Professor, School of Health Studies

E-mail: sburke9@uwo.ca

Online Office Hour: Thursdays 11am – 12pm

Teaching Assistants (TAs)	E-mail	Online Office Hours	Students with Last Names...

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 health communication in both academic and applied settings. Topics include (but are not limited to): an introduction to knowledge translation and exchange; the nature of research and the generation of evidence-based research questions; the art of scientific writing; the publication process; effective presenting skills; posters and infographics; scholarship, graduate school, and professional applications (including CVs); and the practice of preparing brief but informative “lightning talk” presentations. This course is strongly recommended for students taking practical and/or independent study courses in the future, and is geared toward students who are considering graduate school. **The course is an essay course.**

Given this course is offered in a blended format, a strong internet connection is a requirement for the course.

The undergraduate experience is rewarding and challenging socially, emotionally, and intellectually. Finding ways

to balance scholarly life with our personal lives can be tough, but it's important to learn how to manage stress. Western provides several health and wellness-related services to students, which may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>. You can also check out the Campus Recreation Centre or the McIntosh Gallery (<http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>), for alternative spaces to reconnect with your bodies and restore your spirit. You may also want to access local resources that are closer to where you are living during the school year. Recalibrating ourselves emotionally begins with slowing down, reminding ourselves that we are ok, and taking a few deep, slow breaths. This remarkably effective strategy brings the body from stress mode into a more relaxed state.

If you are in emotional or mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western [Mental Health Support - Health & Wellness - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help or Thames Valley Family Services (<https://www.familyservicethamesvalley.com/>), a trusted provider within the community. To help you learn more about mental health, Western has developed an interactive mental health learning module, found here: [Health & Wellness - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#). It's also advisable to have a wellness safety plan if you don't want to reach out to formal services. Having the numbers of a few trusted individuals is another strategy.

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 and exchange 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. Required 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)

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| • Tutorial Attendance and Participation (10%) | Ongoing |
| • Learning Activity – Final Paper Introduction Outline (5%) | Due Date: Feb 10, 2023 (Individual) |
| • Dissemination Plan Report (15%) | Due Date: Feb 17, 2023 (Group) |
| • Dissemination Product (e.g., Evidence-Based Poster, Brief Report, Video Animation, Infographic, etc.) (15%) | Due Date: Mar 3, 2023 (Group) |

- “Lightning Talk” Presentation (20%)
- Final Paper – Scoping or Systematic Review (35%)

Due Date: Mar 14-Apr 4 2023 (Individual)

Due Date: April 6, 2023 (Individual)

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.

Plagiarism Checking: 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>).

E. Tutorials

Tutorial Attendance and Participation: Tutorials will begin on **Tuesday January 17, 2023** and end on **Tuesday April 4, 2023**. 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 tutorials, 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/TA's guidelines. Students who miss tutorials, or parts of them, are responsible for the material they have missed. Instructors/TAs are not obliged to review the contents of missed tutorials. 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.

Online Tutorials and Use of Recordings: When tutorials are held online, they will be recorded. The data captured during these recordings may include your image, voice recordings, chat logs and personal identifiers (name displayed on the screen). The recordings will not be posted on the course OWL site, but may be disclosed to other individuals under special circumstances. Please contact the instructor if you have any concerns related to session recordings. Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation, or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor.

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

Week	Topic(s)
Week 1 (Jan 10)	WELCOME <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course overview and expectations • Introduction to the fundamentals and importance of academic communication in the health sciences • Introduction to knowledge translation and exchange

Week 2 (Jan 17)	FOUNDATIONS IN SCHOLARLY WRITING AND RESEARCH PART I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature of research • Generation of an evidence-based research question • Ethical guidelines and American Psychological Association (APA) formatting • <i>Synchronous Tutorials Begin on Tuesday January 17 (1:30pm – 2:30pm)</i>
Week 3 (Jan 24)	FOUNDATIONS IN SCHOLARLY WRITING AND RESEARCH PART II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The art of scientific writing • The publication process • Learning activity overview – Outline of final paper Introduction (due Feb 10, 2023)
Week 4 (Jan 31)	KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION: COCHRANE GUIDES FOR DISSEMINATION PRODUCTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic conference presentations (i.e., verbal and poster presentations) • Other scholarly dissemination activities (e.g., infographics, virtual presentations, etc.) • Guidelines for preparing a dissemination product • Choosing appropriate images for dissemination products • Dissemination plan report overview (due Feb 17, 2023)
Week 5 (Feb 7)	KNOWLEDGE CREATION AND SYNTHESIS: LIBRARY INFORMATION SESSION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database searching • Introduction to systematic/scoping reviews and meta-analyses • Dissemination Product overview (due March 3, 2023)
Week 6 (Feb 14)	KNOWLEDGE SYNTHESIS, BRIEF KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER, & SCIENTIFIC MANUSCRIPTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of systematic reviews, scoping reviews, and meta-analyses • Introduction to brief reports and presentations • Overview of the scientific manuscript • Review of lightning talk (March 14 – April 4, 2023) and final paper (due April 6, 2023) expectations and guidelines
READING WEEK (Feb 18-26)	
Week 7 (Feb 28)	ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION IN THE HEALTH SCIENCES: PRESENTATION SKILLS & THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation skills training, Western University Centre for Teaching and Learning (<i>*Synchronous presentation—date to be finalized</i>) • Media and social media to enhance research exchange and dissemination (<i>*Asynchronous materials</i>)
Week 8 (March 7)	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: COMMUNICATING “YOU” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarship, graduate school, and professional applications • Resumes and CVs • Learning Activity (CV) – submission and feedback optional

Week 9 (March 14)	KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION & EXCHANGE: RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying the audience Stakeholders and community partnerships Knowledge exchange and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Lightning Talks (3-Minute Presentations; Individual) *Peer evaluations
Week 10 (March 21)	COMMUNICATION WITH RESEARCH TEAMS, PARTNERS, & COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professionalism and etiquette Tools/strategies for effective communication and the creation/maintenance of research and community partnerships Lightning Talks (3-Minute Presentations; Individual) *Peer evaluations
Week 11 (March 28)	FINAL PAPER PREPARATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual work on final paper Lightning Talks (3-Minute Presentations; Individual) *Peer evaluations
Week 12 (April 4)	FINAL PAPER/LIGHTNING TALK PRESENTATIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Final Papers Due: April 6, 2023</u> Lightning Talks (3-Minute Presentations; Individual) *Peer evaluations

Course Delivery in the Event of a COVID-19 Resurgence

Although the intent in this course is for most tutorials to be held in-person, the changing COVID-19 landscape may necessitate some or all of the course to be delivered online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. Any assessments affected will be conducted online as determined by the course instructor. Completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection.

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 lecture videos and 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.

Online Etiquette

Some components of this course might involve online interactions. To ensure the best experience for both you and your classmates, please honour the following rules of etiquette:

- Please “arrive” to class on time
- Please use your computer and/or laptop if possible (as opposed to a cell phone or tablet)
- Ensure that you are in a private location to protect the confidentiality of discussions in the event that a class discussion deals with sensitive or personal material
- To minimize background noise, kindly mute your microphone for the entire class until you are invited to speak, unless directed otherwise
- Please be prepared to turn your video camera off at the instructor’s request if the internet connection becomes unstable
- Unless invited by your instructor, do not share your screen in the meeting

When participating in online meetings, please consider the following:

- If you wish to speak, use the “raise hand” function and wait for the instructor/TA to acknowledge you before beginning your comment or question
- Remember to unmute your microphone and turn on your video camera before speaking
- Self-identify when speaking
- Remember to mute your mic and turn off your video camera after speaking (unless directed otherwise)

General considerations of “netiquette”:

- Keep in mind the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students in the course
- Be courteous toward the instructor, TA, your colleagues, and authors whose work you are discussing (if applicable)
- Be respectful of the diversity of viewpoints that you will encounter in the class and in your readings. The exchange of diverse ideas and opinions is part of the scholarly environment
- Be professional and scholarly in all online postings and discussions

Note that disruptive behaviour of any type during online meetings, including inappropriate use of the chat function, is unacceptable. Students found guilty of Zoom-bombing a class or of other serious online offenses may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

E-mail

The course TAs 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 TAs. **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 tutorial discussions, by completing the assigned readings, and by offering constructive feedback as will be deemed useful to the overall learning experience.

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

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

Although you are welcome to use a computer during tutorials, 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/TA 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 or tutorials – nor may you edit, re-use, distribute, or re-broadcast any of the material posted to the course website.**

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.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

Accommodation and Academic Considerations

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation

policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

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) 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
- (ii) For non-medical absences, submitting appropriate documentation (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to academic advising office 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 an SMC;
- **Are advised that all necessary documentation, forms, etc. are to be submitted to the academic advising office within two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities**

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

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/pdf/board/code.pdf>.

Academic 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 Web site: [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#)

Common Concerns

The table below summarizes a list of common student concerns and how they are to be resolved. If you have a concern that is not listed here, please email your instructor.

Concern	How to address concern
Course administrative matters	Read through the course outline or email instructor if question cannot be answered from information in the course outline.
Course content questions	Refer to the OWL Resources (notes, calendar, etc.). Email the instructor.
Grade disputes and requests for appeals	<p>A student requesting an appeal to a specific course with respect to a grade for an assignment or examination must first contact their instructor to discuss such matters.</p> <p>Visit the following website for guide on submitting an appeal: https://uwo.ca/fhs/policies/appeals.html</p>

Support Services

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

1. Student Development Centre -- <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>
2. Student Health -- <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>
3. Registrar's Office -- <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/>
4. Ombudsperson Office -- <http://www.uwo.ca/ombuds/>