

NORD 835 – Professional Communication

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN CAMPUS	
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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The University of Saskatchewan campus of the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy is situated on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis, while the University of Regina campus is situated on Treaty 4 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nation and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another. As we engage in Remote Teaching and Learning, we would also like to recognize that some may be attending this course from other traditional Indigenous lands. I ask that you take a moment to make your own Land Acknowledgement to the peoples of those lands. In doing so, we are actively participating in reconciliation as we navigate our time in this course, learning and supporting each other.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The course content in NORD 835 was developed by Heather McWhinney.

HONOUR CODE

At the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy (JSGS), we believe honesty and integrity are fundamental in a community dedicated to learning, personal development, and a search for understanding. We revere these values and hold them essential in promoting personal responsibility, moral and intellectual leadership, and pride in ourselves and our University.

As JSGS students, we will represent ourselves truthfully, claim only work that is our own, and engage honestly in all academic assignments.

Since articulated standards and expectations can influence attitudes, and because each of us shares the responsibility for maintaining academic integrity (see below for details on academic integrity at the JSGS), we are committed to upholding the Academic Honor Code.

Academic Honour Pledge

As a member of the JSGS community, I pledge to live by and to support the letter and spirit of JSGS's Academic Honour Code.

REMOTE LEARNING CONTEXT

We acknowledge the complex circumstances – i.e., a worldwide pandemic – in which this course is taking place. Since remote teaching and learning context is new to both instructors and students, all participants should interact with empathy, patience, and care. Links to online learning resources are provided below.

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce government and other professional communication relevant to the North. You will learn the form and function of key documents, such as the professional email, media release, and briefing note, as well as principles of oral communications in a professional environment.

You will learn to analyze various components of communication strategy, including purpose, audience, context, and style, and learn the keys to writing clear grammatical sentences. You will apply the communication concepts and skills you have learned in this course to prepare both your Applied Research Project report and your final research report.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

JSGS has developed a set of three competencies that all graduates will be able to demonstrate. The specific readings, assignments and activities in JSGS 862 will help you both acquire and demonstrate the ability to:

- Understand how economic and political factors interact to create and determine the effect of policy
- Think critically and analytically about policy problems and issues from a political economy perspective
- Analyze policy problems using theories of political economy
- Communicate information and analyses critically and effectively

ATTRIBUTES OF JSGS GRADUATES

Through the development of the following competencies, JSGS MPA graduates will be prepared to meet the policy challenges of a rapidly changing world:

- Analysis and Use of Evidence – how to use evidence and develop the necessary analytical skills to succeed in a public administration career;
- Politics and Democracy – ensuring that students have a deep understanding of the role of politics and democracy in public policy development including the roles of the various institutions and policy actors; and

- Policy Delivery – the importance of effective service delivery and the ongoing management and evaluation of public policy.

COURSE CONTENT AND APPROACH

Most of the course content will be delivered asynchronously in weekly modules, each consisting of text, videos, and readings from the two course textbooks. You will be expected to study the modules and complete weekly quizzes (reading and writing activities) on the course content. We will also hold two synchronous sessions in which you will present a critique of a classmate's opinion piece.

REQUIRED READINGS

Chrisinger D. (2017). *Public Policy Writing That Matters*. John Hopkins University Press

Sword, H. (2016). *The Writer's Diet: A Guide to Fit Prose*. The University of Chicago Press.

Younging, G. (2018). *Elements of Indigenous style: A Guide for Writing by and about Indigenous Peoples*. Brush Education. (Recommended)

COURSE OUTLINE

Jan 11–17: Module 1: Introduction to Professional Communication

Jan 18–24: Module 2: Writing Plainly

Jan 25–31: Module 3: Speaking Well

Feb 1–7: Module 4: Writing Policy Reports and Briefing Notes

Feb 8–14: Module 5: Writing Correctly and Editing Your Work—Part 1

Feb 15–21: BREAK

Feb 22–28: Module 6: Writing Media Releases, Social Media Communication, and Email

Mar 1–7: Module 7: Writing Correctly and Editing Your Work—Part 2

Mar 8–15: Module 8: Using the Language of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Opinion Piece:** You will write an opinion piece of 750 to 1000 words on a topic of interest to you and to the readers of a particular newspaper. You might critique an existing policy and suggest an alternative, or you might argue that a particular policy is working. The piece should be well argued using evidence and the techniques of argumentation we have discussed in NORD 830 and 835. The writing should be clear, concise, and engaging. You will submit your opinion piece to Heather and also post it on the Discussion Board. (Due January 31)

2. **Critique of Opinion Piece:** You will prepare a 250- to 400-word critique of a classmate's opinion piece, which you will present at a synchronous session with your classmates. (Due February 7)
3. **Briefing Note:** You will prepare a two-page briefing note and send it to your partner to critique. In turn, you will critique your partner's briefing note. You will then revise your briefing note (considering your partner's feedback) and submit it to Heather, along with the critique. (Due to your partner February 21, due to Heather February 28)
4. **Media Release:** You will prepare a one-page media release on a topic of your choice, submit it to Heather, and post it to the Discussion Board (Due to Heather March 15).
5. **Quizzes:** There will be eight quizzes, one for each module.
6. **Class Participation:** You will be evaluated on your contribution to the class through partner activities and to the Discussion Board.

EVALUATION

Opinion Piece	25 %
Critique of Opinion Piece	10 %
Briefing Note	25 %
Media Release	10 %
Module Quizzes (Three marks each)	24 %
Class participation	6 %
Total	100 %

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to attend all the synchronous sessions. If you are unable to attend (e.g., Internet problems), you must let the instructor know.

Active participation in class discussion is expected by all students.

USE OF VIDEO AND RECORDING OF THE COURSE

Video conference sessions in this course, including your participation, will be recorded and made available only to students in the course for viewing via Canvas after each session. This is done, in part, to ensure that students unable to join the session (due to, for example, issues with their Internet connection) can view the session later. This will also provide students with the opportunity to review any material discussed. Students may also record sessions for their own use, but they are not permitted to distribute the recordings (see below).

Please remember that course recordings belong to the instructor, the University, and/or others (like a guest lecturer) depending on the circumstance of each session, and are protected by copyright. Do not download, copy, or share recordings without the explicit permission of the instructor.

For questions about recording and use of sessions in which you have participated, including any concerns related to your privacy, please contact your instructor. More information on class recordings can be found in the Academic Courses Policy at <https://policies.usask.ca/policies/academic-affairs/academic-courses.php#5ClassRecordings>.

COPYRIGHT

Course materials are provided to you based on your registration in a class, and anything created by your professors and instructors is their intellectual property, unless materials are designated as open education resources. This includes exams, PowerPoint/PDF slides and other course notes. Additionally, other copyright-protected materials created by textbook publishers and authors may be provided to you based on license terms and educational exceptions in the Canadian Copyright Act (see <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>).

Before you copy or distribute others' copyright-protected materials, please ensure that your use of the materials is covered under the University's Fair Dealing Copyright Guidelines available at <https://library.usask.ca/copyright/general-information/fair-dealing-guidelines.php>. For example, posting others' copyright-protected materials on the open web is not covered under the University's Fair Dealing Copyright Guidelines, and doing so requires permission from the copyright holder.

For more information about copyright, please visit <https://library.usask.ca/copyright/index.php>. For information on students' rights, see <https://library.usask.ca/copyright/students/rights.php>, or contact the University's Copyright Coordinator at copyright.coordinator@usask.ca or 306-966-8817.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Information on Netiquette. These resources show you how to appropriately connect and communicate in a remote teaching and learning context. The first one is a video made by Martin Boucher and Heather McWhinney for JSGS. The last one is a video on how to write a polite email message, also by Martin and Heather.

- <https://usask.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=f39a126a-ee27-44f9-9ec5-ac2400e128c7>
- <https://teaching.usask.ca/remote-teaching/netiquette.php>
- <https://studentstest.usask.ca/articles/netiquette.php>

Remote learning Readiness Tutorial for Students. This resource engages you in learning about the skills associated with remote learning success.

- https://libguides.usask.ca/remote_learning.
- <https://students.usask.ca/remote-learning/index.php>.

Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism. There are three resources listed below. The first one is a video made especially for JSGS students by Martin Boucher and Heather McWhinney. The second, also a video by Martin and Heather, addresses students' frequently asked questions about citing and paraphrasing. The third is a guide on your responsibilities regarding academic work, your rights, and the supports and services available to ensure you succeed within the larger scholarly community.

- <https://edpuzzle.com/embed/media/5f4f0087b086963f62d35d52>
- <https://usask.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=7fd78297-b175-4c47-ba48-ac4300246e16>
- <https://libguides.usask.ca/AcademicIntegrityTutorial>

Using Inclusive Language. These three videos by Martin Boucher and Heather McWhinney address issues of diversity and inclusion in research and language. The first one is general; the second is on conventions for writing about Indigenous Peoples; and the third is on Indigenous expressions.

- <https://usask.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=3612d5de-1f72-4573-a3c6-ac24003b3fd3>
- <https://usask.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=f1e308cb-eb9c-4c89-9df6-ac8d001d9de0>
- <https://usask.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=3c38d24e-2a9b-4b97-ad52-ac43003a1176>

General Wellness. Be Well at USask is a podcast for all members of the university community highlighting campus initiatives and resources designed to engage and support. Included are episodes on how to thrive at university, transitioning to remote learning, academic supports, career planning in a crisis, as well as many other student supports. See https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQptLdMDrox2_HZ0XAfHQW6DZoQOhoXes.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignment will be assigned a penalty of 5%; assignments more than a week late will lose a full grade of 10%; special circumstances will be considered upon application by the student.

ADDITIONAL EVALUATION INFORMATION

More information on the Academic Courses Policy on course delivery, examinations and assessment of student learning can be found at: <http://policies.usask.ca/policies/academic-affairs/academic-courses.php>

The University of Saskatchewan Learning Charter is intended to define aspirations about the learning experience that the University aims to provide, and the roles to be played in realizing these aspirations by students, instructors and the institution. A copy of the Learning Charter can be found at: <http://teaching.usask.ca/about/policies/learning-charter.php>.

ENROLLMENT LIMIT

Class enrollment will be limited to 30 students.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Students in this course who, because of a disability, may have a need for accommodations are encouraged to discuss this need with the instructor and to contact one of the following:

USask: Disability Services for Students (DSS) – 306-966-7273.

U of R: Coordinator of Special Needs Services – 306-585-4631.

STUDENTS EXPERIENCING STRESS

Students who are experiencing stress can seek assistance from one of the following:

USask: Student Affairs and Outreach – <https://students.usask.ca/health/centres/student-affairs-and-outreach.php> or call (306) 966-5757.

U of R: Counselling Services – <http://www.uregina.ca/student/counselling/contact.html> or call (306) 585-4491 between 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saskatchewan time Monday to Friday.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND CONDUCT

Understanding and following the principles of academic integrity and conduct is vital to your success in graduate school. Ensuring that your work is your own and reflects both your own ideas and those of others incorporated in your work is important: ensuring that you acknowledge the ideas, words, and phrases of others that you use is a vital part of the scholarly endeavour. The JSGS has developed an Honour Code (see above) that encapsulates these values.

If you have any questions at all about academic integrity in general or about specific issues, contact any faculty member and we can discuss your questions. For more information, please see:

USask: Guidelines for Academic Conduct – www.usask.ca/university_secretary/council/reports_forms/reports/guide_conduct.php.

U of R: Academic Misconduct – <https://www.uregina.ca/president/executive-team/ed-governance-univ-secretary/student-appeals/student-behaviour.html>

JSGS GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

85+ excellent

A superior performance with consistent strong evidence of:

- a comprehensive, incisive grasp of the subject matter;
- an ability to make insightful critical evaluation of the material given;
- an exceptional capacity for original, creative and/or logical thinking;
- an excellent ability to organize, to analyze, to synthesize, to integrate ideas, and to express thoughts fluently; and
- an excellent ability to apply theories to real-world problems and intersect with related disciplines.

80-85 very good

An excellent performance with strong evidence of:

- a comprehensive grasp of the subject matter;
- an ability to make sound critical evaluation of the material given;
- a very good capacity for original, creative and/or logical thinking;
- an excellent ability to organize, to analyze, to synthesize, to integrate ideas, and to express thoughts fluently; and

- a strong ability to apply theories to real-world problems and intersect with related disciplines.

75-80 good

A good performance with evidence of:

- a substantial knowledge of the subject matter;
- a good understanding of the relevant issues and a good familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques;
- some capacity for original, creative and/or logical thinking;
- a good ability to organize, to analyze, and to examine the subject material in a critical and constructive manner; and
- some ability to apply theories to real-world problems and intersect with related disciplines.

70-75 satisfactory

A generally satisfactory and intellectually adequate performance with evidence of:

- an acceptable basic grasp of the subject material;
- a fair understanding of the relevant issues;
- a general familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques;
- an ability to develop solutions to moderately difficult problems related to the subject material; and
- a moderate ability to examine the material in a critical and analytical manner.