

NORD 835.2 Academic Writing

	UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN CAMPUS	UNIVERSITY OF REGINA CAMPUS
INSTRUCTOR:	Heather McWhinney	
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OFFICE HOURS:	By appointment (by Zoom)	
OFFICE LOCATION:	n/a	
TERM:	Term 2	
ROOM:	n/a	
DATE AND TIME:	Thursdays, 11:00 a.m. (SK time)	

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 and briefing note, as well as the 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 to develop, edit, and revise your own work. You will apply the communication concepts and skills you have learned in this course to prepare both your internship proposals and your final research reports.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you should be able to do the following:

- Convey your message to any audience, whether in the North or elsewhere.
- Assess and revise your own writing, identifying common patterns and errors.
- Write a clear, concise, pertinent, and grammatically correct briefing note for an official.
- Explain how social media is transforming government communications.
- Write a clear, well-organized, and grammatically correct email message dealing with a problem that needs to be addressed.
- Craft a media release for print and broadcast media.
- Identify the features of a clear, memorable, and well-organized oral presentation, including the development of a plan, preparation for delivery, and delivery strategies.

REQUIRED READINGS

The information for the course is contained in the course modules on Canvas. One textbook is required, and another is recommended:

Chrisinger, D. (2017). *Public policy writing that matters*. John Hopkins University Press. (Required)
 Younging, G. (2018). *Elements of Indigenous style: A guide for writing by and about Indigenous Peoples*.
 Brush Education. (Recommended)

COURSE SCHEDULE

January 9–15	Module 1: Introduction to Professional Communication
January 16–22	Module 2: Writing Plainly
January 23–29	Module 3: Speaking Well
January 30–February 5	Module 4: Writing Policy Reports and Briefing Notes
February 6–12	Module 5: Writing Correctly and Editing Your Work, Part 1
February 13–19	Module 6: Writing Media Releases, Social Media Communication, and Email
February 20–26	Reading Week
February 27–March 5	Module 7: Writing Correctly and Editing Your Work, Part 2
March 6–March 12	Module 8: Using the Language of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

SESSIONS IN REAL TIME

We will meet on Zoom two to three times per month to discuss the content of the modules and to address your questions. Our sessions will be on Thursday mornings at 11:00 a.m. Saskatchewan time, and they will last one hour. Five of these sessions will be workshops on writing issues and strategies. The first session will be on January 12. Here is the schedule of meeting times:

- January 12 (Workshop on APA format)
- January 19 (Workshop on writing plainly and concisely)
- January 26 (Discussion on oral communications)
- February 9 (Discussion on briefing notes)
- February 16 (Workshop on commas)
- March 2 (Workshop on colons, semicolons, and dashes)
- March 9 (Workshop on common grammar errors)

Attending these sessions is not mandatory, but I do recommend that you join the group at least twice a month.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Eight module assignments, one for each module
2. Opinion Piece: You will write an opinion piece on a topic that interests you
3. Briefing Note: You will prepare a two-page briefing note on a policy problem

EVALUATION

Module Assignments (7.5 marks each): 60%
Opinion Piece: 20%
Briefing Note 20%
Total 100%

DUE DATES FOR ASSIGNMENTS

Module 1 Assignment – January 15
Module 2 Assignment – January 22
Module 3 Assignment – January 29
Module 4 Assignment – February 5
Module 5 Assignment – February 12
Module 6 Assignment – February 19
Opinion Piece Assignment – February 26
Module 7 Assignment – March 5
Module 8 Assignment – March 12
Briefing Note Assignment – March 19

ENROLLMENT LIMIT

Class enrollment will generally be limited to 30 students.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This course was developed by Heather McWhinney, with the technical assistance of Emmy Stavostrand Neuls.