

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: Professional Communications

Course Number and Section

MOS

2265F 550

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Instructor Email(s): pgavin@uwo.ca

Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL Brightspace is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

Increasingly, employers require post-secondary graduates to demonstrate advanced competencies in written, verbal, visual, and research-mediated communication. Prospective employees are expected to communicate convincingly using both general principles of rhetoric and genre-specific conventions. In today's workforce, however, professional communication is no longer strictly human-to-human; it occurs within a hybrid ecosystem mediated by algorithmic filters, automated screening tools, and generative artificial intelligence. Graduates must learn to write for a dual audience: write for machine-reading layers (such as Applicant Tracking Systems and AI summarizers) while preserving the authentic, persuasive human voice necessary to connect with human decision-makers. This course positions generative AI not as a shortcut, but as a site of rhetorical negotiation. Through carefully tailored readings, lectures, discussion activities, and individual- and team-based research and communication assignments, students explore how to write both with AI (leveraging models for research, scaffolding, and iterative editing) and against AI (critically resisting algorithmic homogenization, identifying structural bias, and asserting human agency over automated outputs). The goal: develop strategies and practices essential to becoming thoughtful, confident, credible, and effective communicators.

Learning Outcomes: one outcome per entry

Apply principles of rhetoric and genre-specific conventions to produce effective professional communications across written, verbal, and visual formats, including résumés, memos, correspondence, executive summaries, and policy documents

Analyze communication situations involving both human and machine audiences and create persuasive, engaging content that satisfies algorithmic screening layers (such as Applicant Tracking Systems and AI summarizers) and connects with human decision-makers

Deploy generative AI deliberately within research and writing workflows—for discovery, scaffolding, and iterative revision—and document, justify, and reflect on those choices

Distinguish authentic voice from algorithmic homogenization and synthetic tone, and revise against them to assert accountable, human-centered communication

Empirically evaluate and compare AI and research-synthesis tools—distinguishing what each retrieves, generates, or filters—on accuracy, citation provenance, bias, data privacy, and workflow fit, and communicate the findings to organizational stakeholders

Design responsible, human-in-the-loop AI communication workflows and policies for a specific organizational context, including usage guidelines, disclosure protocols, and risk mitigation

Textbooks and Course Materials:

The weekly readings have been compiled from a wide variety of sources and will be posted in the OWL course site. There are no costs associated with accessing them. There are a few books that we consult frequently. Deliberately, they pull in two directions: practical guides to working with generative AI and defenses of the clear, human writing this course asks you to protect. Each (minus Warner’s More than Words) is available digitally via omni. Relevant portions will be posted to the course site.

Chan, Mable. English for Business Communication. Routledge, 2020.

Corbett, Charlie. The Art of Plain Speaking: How to Write and Speak in a Way that Will Impress the People that Matter. Routledge, 2019.

Coven, Martha. Writing on the Job: Best Practices for Communicating in the Digital Age. Princeton University Press, 2022.

Mollick, Ethan. Co-Intelligence: Living and Working with AI. Portfolio/Penguin, 2024.

Warner, John. More Than Words: How to Think About Writing in the Age of AI. Basic Books, 2025.

Methods of Evaluation: one assignment per entry

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Attendance and Active Engagement	12/09/2026	20%
Personal Portfolio	10/30/2026	25%
Tool Evaluation	11/18/2026	15%
Organizational AI Audit and Policy Proposal	12/13/2026	40%

Friday, August 14, 2026

Huron Brief Course Outline 2026/27

In-course Costs \$000.00

For Textbooks and Course Materials (below), you are required to include the cost of each textbook or other learning material.

Note whether there are any restrictions that would prevent a student from using a second-hand copy. Here is some suggested text:

- Required textbook: [author, title, edition, publisher, date]. Cost: [insert amount].
 - Or include the weblink of the textbook’s publisher site that includes the cost information.
- Students need to purchase this edition. Second-hand or older editions will not be sufficient.

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OR Students are welcome to purchase second-hand or earlier editions of this textbook.

- This course has an optional field trip that costs [insert amount].
- This course has a required field component that costs [insert amount].

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.