



**INSTRUCTORS:**

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**PROGRAM COORDINATOR:**

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**SCHEDULE:**

Thursdays, 2:30-5:30 pm.

**ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS AND RECORDINGS:**

I am looking forward to getting to know each of you! To get the most out of this class, **it is essential that you attend in person**, as each class will require interaction from all of you. Due to the interactive nature of this course, classes will not be recorded.

**OFFICE HOURS:**

To speak with me about questions related to course content and assignments, I will be available by Zoom on Mondays from 1:00-2:00pm. If you are not available at this time and would like to chat, please send me an email and we will find a time that works.

**TECHNOLOGY PLATFORM:**

I will use Avenue to Learn to share course content and make announcements. I will use Avenue to Learn to announce or facilitate any class that needs to move online for unforeseen circumstances (i.e., instructor illness, inclement weather, etc.). You will be provided with as much advanced warning as possible and this information will be shared on Avenue to Learn and via McMaster email. Please check your Avenue to Learn notification settings so that course announcements are sent directly to your McMaster email to ensure no important information is missed.

**MATERIALS AND FEES:**

None- I will distribute any required readings or resources through Avenue to Learn as needed.

## **COURSE OVERVIEW**

This interactive course is designed to engage you and equip you with the essential communication skills needed for successful interactions in professional environments, including healthcare and rehabilitation. Get ready to enhance your ability to connect effectively and confidently in diverse environments! How will we do this?! Check out our three main themes:

### **1. Unpacking the Power of Communication**

In the first portion of the course, we will explore the boundaries of communication, language, and culture, including how communication develops across the lifespan, from birth to old age. You will gain an understanding of various communication disorders and impairments and learn about what can be done to enhance communication and connection for these individuals.

### **2. Communicate like a Pro**

In the second portion of the course, we will focus on specific coaching and skill building in written, oral, and non-verbal communication. We will explore the role of communication in advocacy, and the importance of crafting a clear and concise argument. We will also discuss strategies for communicating with colleagues and future employers, and the potential consequences of poor communication.

### **3. Communicating and Connecting with Others**

The third and final portion of the course will explore best practices for effective communication with others. We will discuss important topics, such as trauma informed care, responsive language, networking, and advocacy. We will also have opportunities to practice different communication styles in realistic scenarios with peers, community members, and people with lived and living experiences.

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

### **1. Understand communication across the life span.**

- We will explore communication development from birth to old age.
- We will work to gain a foundational knowledge of various disorders and impairments that can alter communication and corresponding assessments and interventions that can be used to facilitate connection and communication.

### **2. Develop professional written communication skills.**

- We will learn to create clear and concise written documents, including plain language summaries, peer feedback, and professional correspondence, tailored to different contexts to develop professional writing skills.

### **3. Demonstrate effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills.**

- We will have the opportunity to practice various communication styles suitable for interacting in a wide range of environments.

- We will learn strategies for clear and effective oral communication, such as crafting an argument, active listening, and presentation skills.

## **ASSESSMENTS:**

These assignments have been developed so that you can build tangible communication skills through practice and meaningful feedback. All written assignments should be submitted to Avenue to Learn via the assignments tab, unless prior approval is given.

<b>45%</b>	Quizzes (3 quizzes x 15% each)
<b>15%</b>	Resume and Cover Letter
<b>20%</b>	Creation of a Plain Language Resource
<b>20%</b>	Group Debate

### **Grading Details**

Additional details and a rubric for each assignment will be provided on Avenue to Learn

#### **Quizzes (3 quizzes x 15% each) – 45%**

Multiple choice quizzes will be available on Avenue to Learn. At the end of each class theme, there will be a short quiz. Quizzes are designed with the expectation that you will review the course material. Avenue to Learn will be used to complete each quiz. Quizzes will be **open on Thursday January 30th, Thursday March 6th, & Wednesday March 26<sup>th</sup>** at 6pm. You will have 1-week to complete the quiz. Quizzes will close at 11:59pm on February 5<sup>th</sup>, March 12<sup>th</sup>, and April 1<sup>st</sup>. Once the quiz is opened, you will have one hour to complete the quiz. It is up to you to decide the time of the week that is most suitable to complete the quiz. Each of the quizzes in this course will consist of multiple-choice questions that will assess factual, conceptual, and/or applied knowledge from the course. Each question is worth 1 mark; no partial marks are awarded.

#### **Resume and Cover Letter – 15%**

Resume and Cover Letters are due **February 14th** at 11:59pm via Avenue to Learn. Peer feedback is due **February 26th<sup>th</sup>** via Avenue to Learn at 11:59pm. You will be provided with a job posting and will then create a corresponding cover letter and resume. You will be marked for completion of each component (5%). You must then provide feedback on a peer's letter and resume. The quality, professionalism, and thoroughness of the feedback will be formally assessed (10%).

#### **Creation of a Plain Language Health Resource – 20%**

Due at 11:59pm on **March 5<sup>th</sup>** via A2L. You will be provided with a research article on a health-related topic. You will then individually prepare a resource summarizing the important content in a format that is easy to understand. You are encouraged to be creative and may choose any format for this resource (i.e., infographic, video, song, poem, painting). A short (500 word) reflection describing your process will accompany the resource.

### **Group Debate – 20%**

Debates will take place during the final class on **April 3<sup>rd</sup>**. You will be divided into small groups and then subdivided into a group for (affirmative) and against (opposition) the resolution. Debates will be presented in front of a panel of community members and experts from the McMaster academic community who will provide feedback on your presentation and communication skills.

### **REQUESTS FOR RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC TERM WORK (MSAF):**

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

**For absences from classes lasting up to 3 sessions:** Using the McMaster student absence form (MSAF) on-line, self-reporting tool, undergraduate students may report absences lasting up to 3 days and may also request relief for missed academic work. The submission of medical or other types of supporting documentation is normally not required. Students may use this tool to submit a maximum of one request for relief of missed academic work per term. Students must immediately follow up with the course instructor regarding the nature of the relief. Failure to do so may negate the opportunity for relief. It is the prerogative of the instructor of the course to determine the appropriate relief for missed term work in this course.

**For absences from classes lasting more than 3 days:** Students who are absent more than five days cannot use the self-reporting tool to request relief. They **MUST** report to their Faculty Office to discuss their situation and may be required to provide appropriate supporting documentation. If warranted, students will be approved to use a discretionary version of the MSAF on-line, self-reporting tool.

**For the reporting of more than two requests for relief per term:** Students who wish to submit more than two requests for the relief of missed academic work per term cannot use the online, self-reporting tool to request relief. They **MUST** report to their Faculty Office to discuss their situation and may be required to provide supporting documentation. If warranted, students will be approved to use a discretionary version of the MSAF on-line, self-reporting tool.

**For absences from classes lasting more than five days or for the reporting of more than requests for relief per term:** If the reason was medical, the approved McMaster University Medical Form covering the relevant dates must be submitted. The student must be seen by a doctor at the earliest possible date, normally on or before the date of the missed work and the doctor must verify the duration of the illness. Relief will not be considered for minor illnesses. If the reason is non- medical, appropriate documentation with verifiable origin covering the relevant dates must be submitted, normally within five working days. In some circumstances, students may be advised to submit a Petition for Special Consideration (Form A) seeking relief for missed academic work. In deciding whether or not to grant a petition, adequacy of the supporting documentation, including the timing in relation to the due date of the missed work and the degree of the student's incapacitation, may be taken into account. If the petition is approved the Faculty Office will notify the instructor(s) recommending relief. The student must contact the instructor promptly to discuss the appropriate relief. Failure to do so may negate the opportunity for relief. It is the prerogative of the instructor of the course to determine the appropriate relief for missed

term work in his/her course.

The MSAF on-line, self-reporting tool cannot be used to apply for any final examination or its equivalent. See Petitions for Special Consideration in this section of the Calendar. Students should expect to have academic commitments Monday through Saturday but not on Sunday or statutory holidays. Students who require accommodations to meet a religious obligation or to celebrate an important religious holiday should make their requests within three weeks of the start of term to their Faculty office. With a valid MSAF report, missed course work's percent worth will be added to the percent worth of the Final Integrated Report. Without a valid MSAF report, a missed course work will be given a mark of zero. There will be no discretionary approvals given by the Professor.

As a student enrolled in this course you have been granted permission to access an online learning management system Avenue to Learn. Avenue to Learn course pages are considered an extension of the classroom and usage is provided as a privilege subject to the same code of conduct expected in a lecture hall (see relevant section of the student code of conduct below). This privilege allows participation in course discussion forums and access to supplementary resource course materials. Please be advised that all areas of Avenue to Learn, including discussion forums, are owned and operated by McMaster University. Any content or communication deemed inappropriate by the course instructor (or designated individuals) may be removed at her/his discretion. Per the University Technology Services Code of Conduct, all members of the McMaster community are obligated to use computing resources in ways that are responsible, ethical and professional. Avenue to Learn Terms of Use are available at <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>.

### **CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS:**

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. The academic credentials that you earn are rooted in the principles of honesty and academic integrity.

**It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in

unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#). Important and helpful information can be found [here](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

#### **AUTHENTICITY/PLAGIARISM DETECTION:**

**Some courses may** use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster’s use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

#### **GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) USE PROHIBITED:**

Students are not permitted to use generative AI in this course. In alignment with McMaster academic integrity policy, it “shall be an offence knowingly to ... submit academic work for assessment that was purchased or acquired from another source”. This includes work created by generative AI tools. Also stated in the policy is the following, “Contract Cheating is the act of “outsourcing of student work to third parties” (Lancaster & Clarke, 2016, p. 639) with or without payment.” Using generative AI tools is a form of contract cheating. Charges of academic dishonesty will be brought forward to the Office of Academic Integrity.

#### **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

#### **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO):**

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty/Program Office **normally within 10**

**working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructor/coordinator as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

#### **COURSES WITH AN ONLINE ELEMENT:**

**Some courses may** use online elements and platforms. Students should be aware that, when they make use of these platforms, information such as first and last names, usernames for the McMaster email accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

#### **COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING:**

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors. Students must not disseminate these materials to others not registered in the course, or post to third-party websites. The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course by the instructor for instructional purposes; students may make recordings for the purpose of personal study but must not be disseminated in any form. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

#### **ONLINE PROCTORING:**

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

#### **EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES:**

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (severe weather, labour disruptions, etc). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L, Microsoft Teams and/or McMaster email.

#### **HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS:**

As a signatory on the Okanagan Charter, McMaster University is committed to enhancing mental health and wellness and provides various resources for students to manage their well-being. Students are encouraged to seek support as necessary; the following are several campus- and community-based resources that you may find helpful. For more resources and additional information, please visit <https://wellness.mcmaster.ca/resources/>

#### **ON-CAMPUS RESOURCES:**

**Student Wellness Centre:** Provides counselling, medical services, wellness education, guided self-help, and other relevant resources. PGCLL 210; 905-525-9140, x27700; <https://wellness.mcmaster.ca>

**Sexual Violence Support:** An on-campus resource where students, staff, and faculty of all backgrounds and social identities can find support and information about sexual, intimate partnership or family violence. UH 104; 905-525-9140 x20909; <https://svpro.mcmaster.ca>

**Faculty/Program Office:** Feel free to contact an Academic Advisor in your Faculty/Program Office who can connect with academic advising and connect you with other resources.

#### **OFF-CAMPUS RESOURCES:**

**Good2Talk:** Free, confidential helpline providing professional counselling and information and referrals for mental health, addictions and well-being to post-secondary students in Ontario, 24/7/365; 1-866-925-5454; <https://good2talk.ca>

**SACHA (Sexual Assault Centre - Hamilton Area):** Confidential, anonymous 24-hour nonjudgmental telephone support for adults who have experienced sexual violence. 905-525-4162; <http://sacha.ca>

If you have immediate safety concerns for yourself or others, call **Campus Security** who will respond with the **MSU Emergency First Response Team (EFRT)** at 905-522-4135 or call 911 if you are off campus.

#### **COURSE MODIFICATION:**

At certain points in the course, it may make good sense to modify the schedule, deadlines, evaluation, or other elements. If such changes become necessary, students will be notified accordingly.

#### **GRADING SCALE:**

Conversion from percentages to letter grades will follow the standard McMaster procedure. **All percentage grades within 0.5% of the next letter grade will be reviewed (rounding not guaranteed).**

%	Letter	%	Letter	%	Letter	%	Letter	%	Letter
90-100	A+	77-79	B+	67-69	C+	57-59	D+	0-49	F
85-89	A	73-76	B	63-66	C	53-56	D		
80-84	A-	70-72	B-	60-62	C-	50-52	D-		

#### **EMAIL COMMUNICATION:**

All emails sent to the instructor must originate from your **official McMaster University email accounts**.

#### **REFERENCING STYLE:**

Within the course, APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition formatting is the preferred referencing style.



**LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

McMaster University recognizes and acknowledges that it is located on the traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee nations, and within the lands protected by the Dish with One Spoon wampum agreement.