

**Business C725  
Managing Communications in Health Care  
Winter 2020 Course Outline**

**Health Policy and Management  
DeGroote School of Business  
McMaster University**

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***COURSE OBJECTIVES***

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This course is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills to understand strategic communication management and principles, theoretical perspectives and practices, and to apply them in the healthcare industry. The ability to communicate complex information and ideas effectively to diverse audiences is increasingly recognized as a critical element of successful healthcare organizations.

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***INSTRUCTORS, CONTACT INFORMATION, & COURSE SITE***

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**Instructors**

Rebecca Edgar, MCM  
[edgarr@mcmaster.ca](mailto:edgarr@mcmaster.ca)  
(416) 704-6640

Neil Barr, PhD  
[barrn@mcmaster.ca](mailto:barrn@mcmaster.ca)  
(905) 525-9140 ext. 21579

**Course website:** <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>

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***COURSE DESCRIPTION***

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This course explores concepts, research, and theories relating to healthcare communications ranging from organizational and community perspectives, to global issues and the role of media in shaping public opinion. The use of technology and social media will be explored as will issues of transparency and confidentiality. Students will gain an understanding of the importance of best practices associated with various approaches to effective communication, including strategic communication planning.

This multi-disciplinary course has been designed for students with an interest in strategic management, marketing and crisis management, health services delivery, public health, and global health. The course will be delivered in an online format in which students participate in weekly discussions and/or assignments that require them to analyze readings and/or case studies.

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### ***LEARNING OUTCOMES***

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Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Define and explain health communication.
- Understand and apply theoretical frameworks related to health communication.
- Understand the goals of health communication and effective strategy development to achieve these goals.
- Explore the concept of health literacy from a communication perspective.
- Demonstrate awareness of cultural issues in the creation of health communication plans.
- Understand the role of new and traditional media in health communication.
- Describe and apply the basic principles of risk and crisis communication.
- Understand the role of communication in ethical decision-making.

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### ***REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS***

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#### **Required:**

Course materials are available on Avenue to Learn (<http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>) **Free**

Hicks, N. J., & Nicols, C. M. (2017). *Health Industry Communication: New Media, New Methods, New Message, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. ~ \$ 105

- Purchase a copy online: <https://www.amazon.ca/Health-Industry-Communication-Methods-Message/dp/1284077756>

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### ***EVALUATION***

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Learning in this course comes from readings, reflection and analysis, participation in online class discussion, and preparation of assignments. All work will be evaluated on an individual basis except where group work is expected. In these cases, group members will share the same grade unless all group members agree to an adjustment.

### Components and Weights

Participation	Online Contributions	45%
Assignment #1	Communication Plan: Proposal	10%
Assignment #2	Communication Plan: Goals, Objectives, Audience, Messaging	20%
Assignment #3	Communication Plan: Full plan plus Strategies, Tactics, Measurement, Timeline, Budget	25%

#### **Participation: Online Contribution (45%)**

Tasks will be posted online for each of the weeks in which they are required to be completed. These tasks may range from reading course materials and participating in an online discussion forum to posting answers to specific questions. Students are expected to post an initial (main) response to the weekly question(s). In addition, students are expected to participate in the overall online discussion by commenting on other students' posts (a minimum of one reply per week is expected).

Please note that the evaluation of your online participation will be based on the quality of your overall contribution.

Postings should be concise, reflective and respectful. Students are expected to share ideas and experiences related to the topics presented during online discussions.

There is also a General Discussion area on the course Avenue to Learn site where students may interact with each other. The instructors will not be monitoring this area routinely; so, if you have an important question, please phone or email the instructors directly using McMaster email (do not email from the Avenue to Learn site, "Avenue Mail").

#### **Assignments (Total of 55%)**

Three assignments are integrated to result in the development and submission of a final Communication Plan. Instructors will provide a detailed description of the requirements of each Assignment. Individual assignments should be submitted using the appropriate Assignments folder on the course Avenue to Learn site by 11:59pm on the due date. Assignments are to be submitted as Microsoft Word documents.

## Grade Conversion

At the end of the course your overall percentage grade will be converted to a letter grade in accordance with the following conversion scheme:

LETTER GRADE	PER CENT	POINTS
A+	90-100	12
A	85-89	11
A-	80-84	10
B+	75-79	9
B	70-74	8
B-	60-69	7
F	00-59	0

## Communication and Feedback

Students who wish to correspond with instructors or teaching assistant directly via email must send messages that originate from their official McMaster University email account. This protects the confidentiality and sensitivity of information as well as confirms the identity of the student. Emails regarding course issues should NOT be sent to the Administrative Assistant.

Instructors are encouraged to conduct an informal course review with students by Week #4 to allow time for modifications in curriculum delivery. Instructors should provide evaluation feedback for at least 10% of the final grade to students prior to Week #8 in the term.

## ***ACADEMIC DISHONESTY***

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

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, such as 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, located at:

[www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity)

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism (e.g., the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained).
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., online search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity/turnitin/students/>

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### ***ONLINE COURSE COMPONENTS***

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In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, usernames for the McMaster e-mail 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 this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure.

If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructors.

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### ***MISSED ACADEMIC WORK***

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#### ***Missed Mid-Term Examinations/Tests/Class Participation***

Where students miss a regularly scheduled midterm or class participation for legitimate reasons as determined by the Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office, the weight for that test/participation will be distributed across other evaluative components of the course at the discretion of the instructor. Documentation explaining such an absence must be provided to the Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office within five (5) working days upon returning to school.

To document absences for health-related reasons, please provide to Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office the Petition for Relief for MBA Missed Term Work and the McMaster University Student Health Certificate which can be found on the DeGroot website at:

<http://mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca/forms-and-applications/>

Please do not use the online McMaster Student Absence Form as this is for Undergraduate students only. University policy states that a student may submit a maximum of three (3) medical certificates per year after which the student must meet with the Director of the program.

To document absences for reasons other than health related, please provide Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office the Petition for Relief for MBA Missed Term Work and documentation supporting the reason for the absence.

Students unable to write a midterm at the posted exam time due to the following reasons: religious; work-related (for part-time students only); representing university at an academic or varsity athletic event; conflicts between two overlapping scheduled mid-term exams; or other extenuating circumstances, have the option of applying for special exam arrangements. Such requests must be made to the Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office at least ten (10) working days before the scheduled exam along with acceptable documentation. Instructors cannot themselves allow students to unofficially write make-up exams/tests. Adjudication of the request must be handled by Student Experience – Academic (MBA).

If a midterm exam is missed without a valid reason, students will receive a grade of zero (0) for that component.

Deadlines for assignments are set. All work must be submitted to the corresponding Avenue to Learn Assignments folder on the due date and time as stated in the Course Schedule. **Do not submit work by email.** Late assignments will be penalized 10% for every 24 hours, or part thereof, they are submitted past their due date and time. If you anticipate being unable to complete an assignment on the due date, please contact the instructors **prior to the due date**. Requests for extensions will not be considered within 48 hours of the deadline except under exceptional circumstances.

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### ***STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES***

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Student Accessibility Services (SAS) offers various support services for students with disabilities. Students are required to inform SAS of accommodation needs for course work at the outset of term. Students must forward a copy of such SAS accommodation to the instructor normally, within the first three (3) weeks of classes by setting up an appointment with the instructor. If a student with a disability chooses NOT to take advantage of an SAS accommodation and chooses to sit for a regular exam, a petition for relief may not be filed after the examination is complete. The SAS website is:

<http://sas.mcmaster.ca>

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***POTENTIAL MODIFICATION TO THE COURSE***

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The instructors and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

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***ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES***

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Your registration and continuous participation (e.g., on Avenue to Learn) to the various learning activities of C725 will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during lecture and/or on A2L. It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies, and to act accordingly.

Lack of awareness of the course policies cannot be invoked at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand.