

**BUSADMIN C725: Managing Health Communications**  
**Winter 2024 Course Outline**  
**Health Policy and Management**  
**DeGroot 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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***INSTRUCTOR, CONTACT INFORMATION, & COURSE SITE***

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**Coordinator/Instructor**

Neil Barr, PhD

Assistant Professor

[barrn@mcmaster.ca](mailto:barrn@mcmaster.ca)

Office Hours: Meeting times can be setup by appointment.

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

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***COURSE DESCRIPTION***

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This asynchronous online course explores concepts, research, and theories related to health communications ranging from organizational and community perspectives to global issues. Students will gain an understanding of the importance of best practices associated with various approaches to effective communication, including strategic communication planning. This multidisciplinary course has been designed for students with an interest in strategic management, marketing, crisis management, health services delivery, public health, and global health. Students are expected to participate in online discussions and prepare assignments based on the analysis of readings and 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 media in health communication
  - Describe and apply the basic principles of risk and crisis communication
  - Understand the role of citizen engagement in community health issues
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### ***COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS***

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#### **Required:**

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

**Free**

#### **Recommended/Optional:**

Hicks, N. J, & Nicols, C. M. (2016/2017). *Health industry Communication: New Media, New Methods, New Message, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Burlington, MA, United States of America: Jones & Bartlett Learning. ~ \$ 110

- 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 (Individual)	Online Contributions	50%
Assignment 1 (Group/Pairs)	Communication Plan – Part 1	20%
Assignment 2 (Group/Pairs)	Communication Plan – Part 2	30%

### Participation: Online Contribution (50%)

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. Additionally, students are expected to participate in the overall online discussion by commenting on other students' posts (note that the evaluation of online participation will be based on the quality of the overall contribution). Students are expected to share ideas and experiences related to the topics presented during online discussions. Further details related to online participation will be provided on Avenue to Learn.

### Assignments (Total of 50%)

Two assignments are integrated to result in the development and submission of a final Communication Plan. The instructor will provide a detailed description of the requirements of each Assignment on Avenue to Learn. 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	Percentage	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	0-59	0

## Communication and Feedback

Students that are uncomfortable in directly approaching an instructor regarding a course concern may send a confidential and anonymous email to the respective Area Chair or Associate Dean:

<http://mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca/contact/anonymous/>

Students who wish to correspond with the instructor 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.

The instructor is 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.

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### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

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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 (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, located at:

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

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism (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") to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to have their work reviewed through Turnitin must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not have their work reviewed through Turnitin. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., an online search). To see the Turnitin Policy, please go to:

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

### ***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 instructor.

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### ***CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS***

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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”; <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Code-of-Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities.pdf>). 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 A2L 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.

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

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When students miss regularly scheduled term work which contributes 10% or more to the final grade, for legitimate reasons as determined by the Student Experience – Academic Office (SEAO), the activity necessary to compensate for the missed work will be determined by the course instructor. The compensatory activities assigned will vary with the nature of the course and the missed requirement. They include, but are not restricted to, an alternative assignment, a rescheduled midterm exam, or reweighting the marks for the missed component to other mark components. Documentation explaining such missed work must be provided to the SEAO within five (5) working days of the scheduled date for completion of the work.

Acceptable reasons for missed work, along with the Petition for Missed Term Work and the MBA Student McMaster University Student Health Certificate, can be found on the DeGroot MBA Student

website (<https://mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca/resources/forms-and-applications/>). Please direct any questions about acceptable documentation to the MBA Academic Advisors ([askmba@mcmaster.ca](mailto:askmba@mcmaster.ca)).

University policy states that a student may submit a maximum of three (3) Petition for Missed Term Work per academic year, after which the student must meet with the Director of the program. If term work is missed without an approved reason, students will receive a grade of zero (0) for that component.

### **Late Submissions**

Deadlines for assignments are set. All work must be submitted to the corresponding A2L 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 instructor 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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## ***RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS, OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES***

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Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy (<https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2019/02/Academic-Accommodation-for-Religious-Indigenous-and-Spiritual-Observances-Policy-on.pdf>). Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation. Students should also contact the instructor as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes and assignments.

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***COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING***

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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. The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. 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.

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***POTENTIAL MODIFICATION TO THE COURSE***

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The instructor 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.