BUSADMIN C725
Managing Health Communications
Winter 2025 Course Outline

Health Policy and Management
DeGroote School of Business
McMaster University

COURSE OBJECTIVE

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.

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor
Rebecca Edgar, MCM
Sessional Faculty
edgarr@mcmaster.ca

Office Hours: Online and/or by phone can be scheduled by appointment

Student TA

TBD

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

Course prerequisites: C650, or registration in Global Health or eHealth, or permission of the instructor

COURSE ELEMENTS

Credit Value:	3	Leadership:	Yes	IT skills:	No	Global view:	Yes
Avenue:	Yes	Ethics:	Yes	Numeracy:	No	Written skills:	Yes
Participation:	Yes	Innovation:	Yes	Group work:	Yes	Oral skills:	No
Evidence-based:	Yes	Experiential:	No	Final Exam:	No	Guest speaker(s):	No

COURSE DESCRIPTION

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, course concepts, and independent research.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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 and objectives 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 and discussions
- Understand the role of new and traditional media in health communication
- Explore the consequences of misinformation and disinformation in health communication and consider best practices to address the risks
- Understand the role of community and importance of citizen engagement in health communication.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

Avenue registration for course content, readings and case materials
  ➢ http://avenue.mcmaster.ca $ FREE

Recommended/Optional:

Hicks, N. J, & Nicols, C. M. (2016/2017). Health industry communication: New media, new methods, new message, 2nd Edition. Burlington, MA, United States of America: Jones & Bartlett Learning. $ Varies (new/used)

  ➢ Purchase a copy here: https://www.amazon.ca/Health-Industry-Communication-Methods-Message/dp/1284077756

EVALUATION

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)	Communication Plan - Part 1	20%
Assignment 2 (Group)	Communication Plan - Part 2	30%

Course Deliverables

Participation: Online Contribution (50%)

Discussion questions will be posted online for each of the weeks in which they are required to be completed. Students are expected to post an initial (main) response to a weekly question. 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 your letter grade in accordance with the following conversion scheme:

LETTER GRADE	PERCENT	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

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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 instructors or TAs 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.

ACTIVITY	DELIVERY	DESCRIPTION	TOOL(S)
Lecture Content	Asynch	Posted lecture slides	A2L
Readings	Asynch	Tied to weekly discussion prompts	Readings linked in Avenue, or in assigned textbook
Group Discussions	Asynch	Approximately eight discussion questions	A2L
One-on-one meetings	By appointment	Students may schedule on-one-one meetings with instructor	Online platform, mobile (TBC)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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

Students are responsible for being aware of and demonstrating behaviour that is honest and ethical in their academic work. Such behaviour includes:

- following the expectations articulated by instructors for referencing sources of information and for group work;
- asking for clarification of expectations as necessary;
- identifying testing situations that may allow copying;
- preventing their work from being used by others (e.g., protecting access to computer files); and
- adhering to the principles of academic integrity when conducting and reporting research.

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 their work to be submitted 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.

COURSES WITH AN ONLINE ELEMENT

All courses use some online elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user

names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course.

Students may be required to use the Respondus LockDown Browser and Respondus Monitor. The Respondus LockDown Browser is a downloadable program that allows a student to take an Avenue to Learn quiz in a secure environment.

For more details about McMaster's use of Respondus Lockdown Browser please go to
https://avenuehelp.mcmaster.ca/exec/respondus-lockdown-browser-and-respondus-monitor/

The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses online 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.

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, Teams, 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.

MISSED ACADEMIC WORK

Missed Class Participation

Please do not use the online McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) as this is for Undergraduate students only. The MBA program will not accept an MSAF.

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 (Student

Experience Academic Office)), 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 re-weighting the marks for the missed component to other mark components. Documentation explaining such missed work must be provided to the SEAO (Student Experience Academic Office) 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 DeGroote MBA Student website (mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca). Please direct any questions about acceptable documentation to the MBA Academic Advisors (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.

Missed Final Examinations

There is no final exam in C725.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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

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 should submit their request to the SEAO (Student Experience Academic Office) *normally within 10 working days* of the beginning of

term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

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.

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.

POTENTIAL MODIFICATION TO THE COURSE

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.

RESEARCH USING HUMAN SUBJECTS

ONLY IF APPLICABLE

Research involving human participants is premised on a fundamental moral commitment to advancing human welfare, knowledge, and understanding. As a research intensive institution, McMaster University shares this commitment in its promotion of responsible research. The fundamental imperative of research involving human participation is respect for human dignity and well-being. To this end, the University endorses the ethical principles cited in the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans:

http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca

McMaster University has mandated its Research Ethics Boards to ensure that all research investigations involving human participants are in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement. The University is committed, through its Research Ethics Boards, to assisting the research community in identifying and addressing ethical issues inherent in research, recognizing that all members of the University share a commitment to maintaining the highest possible standards in research involving humans.

If you are conducting original research, it is vital that you behave in an ethical manner. For example, everyone you speak to must be made aware of your reasons for eliciting their responses and consent to providing information. Furthermore, you must ensure everyone understands that participation is entirely voluntary. Please refer to the following website for more information about McMaster University's research ethics guidelines:

http://reo.mcmaster.ca/

Organizations that you are working with are likely to prefer that some information be treated as confidential. Ensure that you clarify the status of all information that you receive from your client. You **MUST** respect this request and cannot present this information in class or communicate it in any form, nor can you discuss it outside your group. Furthermore, you must continue to respect this confidentiality even after the course is over.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES

Your registration and continuous participation (e.g. on A2L, in the classroom, etc.) to the various learning activities of MBA 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.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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 state 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.

COURSE SCHEDULE

MBA C725
International Human Services Accounting
Winter 2025 Course Schedule

Week	Dates	Module	Topics & Deliverables
1	January 6 - 12	Introduction to Health Communication	**Overview of Health Communication** Online discussion forum #1
2	January 13 - 19		**Strategic Communication Planning** Online discussion forum #2
3	January 20 - 26		**Communication Theory** Online discussion forum #3
4	Jan 27 – Feb 2	Organizational, Social, and Cultural Contexts	**Communication in Health Organizations** Online discussion forum #4
5	February 3 - 9		**Health Literacy, Culture, and Diversity** No discussion – work on assignment
6	February 10 - 16		**Assignment #1 due Feb 16th by 11:59pm**
7	February 17 - 23		**MIDTERM RECESS**
7	Feb 24 – March 2	The Impact of Media on Health Care Organizations	**Traditional and New Media** Online discussion forum #5
8	March 3 - 9		**Advertising and Marketing in Health Care** Online discussion forum #6
9	March 10 - 16	Issues and Crises	**Misinformation and Disinformation** Online discussion forum #7
10	March 17 - 23		**Community Issues and Citizen Engagement** Online discussion forum #8

| 11 | March 24 - 30 | | No discussion this week
Work on assignment |
| 12 | March 31 – April 6 | | **Assignment #2 due April 6th at 11:59 PM** |