

Western University
Faculty of Engineering
Thompson Centre for Engineering Leadership and Innovation

ELI 9600 – Engineering Communications

COURSE OUTLINE Fall 2025

DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will investigate why strong communication competencies are of crucial importance within engineering leadership and innovation. We will explore strategies for ‘engineering’ your communication, and for how to operationalize language, emotional intelligence, and critical thinking to help you thrive professionally.

Students will have the opportunity to study, build, and practice foundational strategies for effectively communicating in the field, and for cultivating meaningful experiences on the job, and in life. Developing the capacity to listen effectively, foster empathy, engage with audiences, design interactions for psychological safety, and identify and respect intercultural contexts will help prepare students for professional practice. In addition to providing students with the opportunity to assess which communication skills may help them succeed *in* the workplace, the course gives students a platform to critically reflect on which communication skills will help them thrive during the job search.

ENROLLMENT RESTRICTIONS

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in the Graduate Diploma in Engineering Leadership and Innovation or Master of Engineering programs.

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Course instructor:

Email address:

Office hours: Flexible based upon student availability either through Teams

TA: None

COURSE FORMAT

Face-to-face with some online components.

TOPICS

Please note the below table is tentative and subject to change.

Topic #	Description	Learning Activities	Tentative timeline
1	Core Communication Skills		
	Lesson 1: Introduction & Defining	Lectures, class discussion, activities	Weeks 1-2

	Communication in Engineering	Additional reading and viewing material, Assessments (Midterm)	
	Lesson 2: Foundations of Communication (Emotional Intelligence, Intercultural Contexts, Bias, Critical Thinking, Navigating Academic Integrity and Artificial Intelligence)	Lectures, class discussion, activities	Weeks 3-5
		Additional reading and viewing material	
		Assessments (Midterm, Final Exam, Presentation)	
	Lesson 3: Psychological Safety and Collaboration	Lectures, class discussion, activities	Weeks 10, 11
		Additional reading and viewing material, Assessments (Final Exam, Presentation)	
2	Tailoring Communication		
	Lesson 4: Designing Communication, Oral Presentation Skills, Understanding Your Audience	Lectures, class discussion, activities	Weeks 7, 9, 10
		Assessments (Final Exam, Presentation)	
3	Career Development Communication		
	Lesson 5: Recruitment Communication Strategies, Presenting Your Value, Researching the Organization, Building Resume and Cover Letter, Interview Strategies	Career Roundtable, Lectures, class activities	Weeks 6, 8
		Additional reading and viewing material, Assessments (Final Exam)	

SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES

Degree Level Expectations	Approx. Weight	Assessment Tools	Outcomes
Depth & Breadth of Knowledge	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Exam Participation Presentation Midterm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use diverse communication methods, and practice related mindsets, to foster collaboration and achieve team goals Identify and understand key course theories and themes related to engineering leadership and innovation communications
Research & Scholarship	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Midterm Final Exam Presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and synthesize literature on best reporting and related communicating practices within engineering leadership and innovation
Level of Application of Knowledge	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Exam Presentation Participation Midterm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice essential career management communication skills and rehearse techniques to enhance employability Understand and articulate the role of emotional intelligence and critical thinking in engineering communication, and apply related skills in a nuanced fashion Practice ability to adapt and tailor communication to different individuals' needs, leveraging diverse communication methods and mindsets
Professional Capacity / Autonomy	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation Participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate the capability to work independently and take leadership Build awareness and practice application of ethical communication strategies for developing a meaningful career
Level of Communication Skills	50%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation Midterm Participation Final Exam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop understanding of diverse rhetorical practices, and adapt relevant communication strategies intended to serve and reach specific audiences Evaluate communication competencies and theories, and articulate evidence that supports a hypothesis and personal position related to said theories Synthesize information from research literatures on best communication practices for meaningful collaboration

Awareness of Limits of Knowledge	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm • Presentation • Participation • Final Exam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify limits of understanding related to course concepts, and areas of growth within personal communication identity • Demonstrate ability to develop communication skills that will support contingency planning in engineering leadership and innovation practice
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ASSESSMENTS

Please note the below table is tentative and subject to change.

Assessment Type	Material Covered	Tentative Due Date	Weight
Participation Class Contribution and Course Engagement Tasks Students must attend class sessions and contribute to class activities, including mini presentations.	All	Throughout Specific due dates of course engagement tasks and breakdown of grade weight will be provided by first class session.	20%
Midterm	Weeks 1-5	Taking place in-class Week 6	25%
Presentation	Topics 2-9	Final deliverable due by Week 10	20%
Final Exam	All	Section 001 – Final Class Session	35%

Activities in which collaboration is permitted:

- Participation - class discussion, exercises, and activities, including case studies and simulations – students are expected to contribute to class discussion, including building and commenting on contributions of other students, and to collaborate in group exercises in class
- Collaborative class activity work supporting Presentation assessment

Activities in which students must work alone (collaboration is not permitted):

- Midterm
- Individual Components of Participation/Class Contribution (e.g. forum postings, mini presentations) and Individual deliverables of Presentation assessment
- Final Exam

TEXTBOOK AND OTHER LEARNING MATERIALS

- Required readings will be posted on OWL Brightspace and discussed in class. There is no required textbook to purchase for this course.
- There may be additional Ivey Publishing and Harvard Business Cases to read, such as for purchase: Sarah Gershman. “To Overcome Your Fear of Public Speaking, Stop Thinking About Yourself”, Harvard Business Publishing, September 2019 – cost: \$4.50USD; and prospectively “Michael A. Roberto, Amy Edmondson. “Leadership and Team Simulation: Everest V3” Harvard Business Publishing, Dec 6, 2017 – cost: \$16.25USD.

OPTIONAL COURSE READINGS

Optional readings will be posted on OWL Brightspace and discussed in class.

GENERATIVE AI

Generative AI (GenAI) tools used for any course assignment or assessment must be disclosed and listed as a resource in your assignment submission. Please see guidance from Instructor on use of Generative AI for individual assessments, assignments, and your work in the course. The use of GenAI tools is not permitted in any type of examination or assessment where the instructor has explicitly prohibited its use. In the instances in which an instructor explicitly prohibits use of generative AI tools, and the use of those tools are detected by the instructor, academic penalties may be imposed.

Please see Western’s policy on AI for further context: <https://ai.uwo.ca/Guidance/Policy.html>.

CHEATING, PLAGIARISM/ACADEMIC OFFENCES

Academic integrity is an essential component of learning activities. Students must have a clear understanding of the course activities in which they are expected to work alone (and what working alone implies) and the activities in which they can collaborate or seek help; see information above and ask instructor for clarification if needed. Any unauthorized forms of help-seeking or collaboration will be considered an academic offense. University policy states that cheating is an academic offence. If you are caught cheating, there will be no second warning. Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence. Academic offences are taken seriously and attended by academic penalties which may include expulsion from the program. Students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism-detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

CONDUCT

Students are expected to follow proper etiquette to maintain an appropriate and respectful academic environment. Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is not appropriately participating in course activities and/or is not following the rules and responsibilities associated with the course activities, will be reported to the Associate Dean (Graduate) (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Associate Dean (Graduate), the student could be

debarred from completing the assessment activities in the course as appropriate.

HEALTH/WELLNESS SERVICES

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several health and wellness related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. Information regarding health- and wellness-related services available to students may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>.

Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Faculty of Engineering has a Student Wellness Counsellor. To schedule an appointment with the counsellor, contact Kristen Edwards (khunt29@uwo.ca) via confidential email and you will be contacted by our intake office within 48 hours to schedule an appointment.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health Support at <https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

SICKNESS

Students should immediately consult with the Instructor (for a particular course) or Associate Chair (Graduate) (for a range of courses) if they have problems that could affect their performance. The student should seek advice from the Instructor or Associate Chair (Graduate) regarding how best to deal with the problem. Failure to notify the Instructor or the Associate Chair (Graduate) immediately (or as soon as possible thereafter) will have a negative effect on any appeal. Obtaining appropriate documentation (e.g., a note from the doctor) is valuable when asking for accommodation due to illness.

Students who are not able to meet certain academic responsibilities due to medical, compassionate or other legitimate reason(s), could request for academic consideration. The Graduate Academic Accommodation Policy and Procedure details are available at: <https://www.eng.uwo.ca/graduate/current-students/academic-support-and-accommodations/index.html>

Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline.

ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION WESTERN (AEW)

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program. Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW): http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html

AEW is a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

STATEMENT ON GENDER-BASED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Western is committed to working to end gender-based and sexual violence on campus and in our community and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced gender-based or sexual violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, here. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.