

We acknowledge that we are living and working on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.



ST. JEROME'S
UNIVERSITY

Department of English
ENGL378 (Section 002)

Professional Communication in Statistics & Actuarial Science (Spring 2022)
Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:00 p.m. – 2:20 p.m.

Instructor Information

Instructor: Michael Lesiuk
Office: SH 2114
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Email: mlesiuk@uwaterloo.ca

This course introduces students to oral and written communication in the fields of statistics and actuarial science. With emphasis on the public presentation of technical knowledge, the ability to give and receive constructive feedback, and communication in a collaborative environment, this course helps students develop proficiencies in critical workplace skills. This course is writing intensive and includes extensive collaborative assignments.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to

- Represent highly technical, specialized knowledge to lay-people, both orally and in writing;
- Perform research, read and summarize peer-reviewed articles;
- Adapt specialized knowledge to a variety of audiences;
- Understand and express the limits of their knowledge;
- Write, revise, and design professional documents that meet industry standards;
- Understand the Actuarial Standards of Practice, and the ethical guidelines for statistical analysis;
- Work collaboratively in a professional context.

Required Texts

None! Everything should be available via LEARN.

Grading and Assignments

Portfolio (60%)

There are three portfolio assignments:

Written Article for Non-Specialists	20%	June 3
Written Report	20%	July 15
Oral Presentation	20%	July 18 + 20

The other smaller assignments in this course—indeed, almost everything we do in class—will be organized around your three portfolio assignments. For example, you can see below that before you hand in your written article for non-specialists, you'll have to hand in a rough draft, and then we'll spend some time on peer review, and *then* you'll finally hand in the new version.

These will be submitted via the dropboxes. As we approach the due dates, I'll include guidelines for the assignments, and I'll go over and discuss the assignments in class. In other words, I'll give you reminders about them and I will gear our class time together toward explicitly helping you with them. You'll be able to pick your own topics, and I will also try to include a fair amount of options and choices in terms of genre and format.

Note that your Report and Oral Presentation must be about the same topic. You can choose the topic, but it must be the same across both assignments.

Workshopping and Participation (40%)

Daily Participation	10%	<i>throughout</i>	
Article Rough Draft	5%	May 20	} <i>Written Article</i>
Article Peer Review	5%	May 27	
Email Proposal	5%	June 17	} <i>Written Report & Oral Presentation</i>
Report Rough Draft	5%	June 30 (Thursday)	
Report Peer Review	5%	July 8	
Do It Badly/Do It Well	5%	July 11 (in-class)	

Daily Participation

I grade participation because this is a workshop-based course, so your participation affects not only your own learning, but also the learning of your peers.

Every class I'll assign a point. You can get a full point (good participation), a half point (present, but unsatisfactory participation), or nothing (not present). At the end of the semester, I'll just divide your points by the total possible points (24) and convert that figure to a mark out of 10.

The main way you earn a point will be using physical **index cards**. Almost every class, I'll ask you to fill out an index card describing your own participation during that class. Did you do the readings? Did you ask a question or join in on the discussion? Did you help a group member during a workshop or exercise? Etc. I'll then collect these from everyone at the end of class. If I have a card from you and it has something reasonable, you get a point. I do it this way because although I want you to be active in the discussions, I also do not think participation should simply be measure of how extroverted you are. In other words, I want you to push yourself in this regard, but what that means is different for everyone. Be honest.

I might also assign a point or not using very easy quizzes or in-class exercises and things like that. I might have a shared Google doc with prompts or I might ask you to post in the discussion forums right then and there during class time. Sometimes I might use the index card *and* something else. But for simplicity, the system will always break down to 1 point per class.

With all of this in mind, **please bring with you pens/pencils as well as your laptop and/or a tablet to class**. In other words, you need to be able to write something on an index card, and you need to be able to type something on a Google Doc or a discussion forum. Obviously, let me know privately if this will be an issue and we'll figure it out.

Other Workshopping Assignments

Before you submit the Written Article, there will be a rough draft and a peer review session. Similarly, before you submit the Written Report, there will be an email proposal, a rough draft and a peer review session. Finally, before the Oral Presentation, we'll also do an exercise I'm calling "Do It Badly, Do It Well."

The rubric for these is very simple: If you do it, and it's a good-faith effort where you've basically followed the instructions, you get an A, or 90%. If you do a really great job, you get 100%. As long as you're not making it obvious that you've skipped all the readings and lectures, you can say things that are objectively wrong or false and still get an A. I do this because I want to encourage you to take risks and experiment. If you try something and it doesn't work, it's fine: you still get an A! Indeed, for stuff like this, I might give the 100% mark just to reward that kind of risk-taking. We'll talk more about why this is important.

Now, I will note here that the one workshopping assignment where one or two students tend to get a surprising or disappointing mark, despite the simple rubric above, is the peer review. I have a very specific way of doing peer review and it's very obvious when students have ignored the instructions, because they do exactly what I've warned them not to do. (I promise it's actually really easy. I'm just saying problems crop up when students assume they know what "peer feedback" entails when, for this particular assignment, what they assume about peer feedback tends to be precisely what they shouldn't do.)

Course Policies

What if we go remote (due to COVID)?

If we go remote for less than two weeks...

If the shift to remote learning is two weeks or less, we'll stick to synchronous meetings (i.e., our regularly scheduled programming) at 1 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays. I will have exercises we can do virtually, and I'll figure out how that participation is graded for these meetings. (It'll be very similar to our in-person meetings.)

If we go remote for the rest of the semester.

If the shift to remote learning is permanent, we will switch to **as**ynchronous meetings. In other words, there will be no scheduled meeting times.

The way it will work is every week on Monday morning, you'll see a new content module on LEARN with a series of videos and "tasks" for you to complete. These tasks will always be due Friday at 11:59 p.m.

These tasks will effectively replace our in-class discussions and participation. The tasks will include things like, "Using these prompts, please post in our discussion forums; your post must be minimum 400 words," or "Complete this super easy quiz." Since these tasks will effectively be the participation grade, they'll use the same rubric: If you do them, and you basically follow the instructions (and it's not obvious you skipped all the videos for that week), you get an A. The weighting of the assignments will likely remain the same. I might increase the weight of the participation grade if the switch happens very early in the semester.

Late Submission Policy:

Late work for the **Portfolio Assignments** will normally be penalized 4% per day to a maximum of 20%. After five days you must email me to submit your assignment. Please let me know if you will be unable to meet a deadline. I do grant extensions on a case-by-case basis. (Generally, my concern is that work does not pile up for you and that you are able to finish the semester.)

Late work for the **Workshopping and Participation** tasks (rough drafts, peer review, etc.) will be penalized at 10% per day up to a maximum of 50%. This is because of the simple, "If you do it, you get an A," rubric and because, like the participation, not getting them done affects other students and/or our ability to run the class. (For example, if I don't have the rough draft on time, it's hard for me to put you into groups for peer feedback. If someone doesn't get your peer feedback when on time, that person will have less time to use that feedback.)

Chosen / Preferred Name:

Please let me know if you'd prefer me to use a different name than appears on LEARN. Note also that you can change your preferred name in [WatIAM](#). See [Updating Personal Information](#).

Mental Health:

All of us need a support system. The SJU faculty and staff encourage students to seek out mental health support if they are needed.

On Campus:

- SJU Wellness Coordinator: Lindsay Thompson (lindsay.thompson@uwaterloo.ca)
- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 x32655
- [MATES](#): one-to-one peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and Counselling Services
- Health Services Emergency service: located across the creek from Student Life Centre

Off campus, 24/7:

- [Good2Talk](#): Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-4300 x6880
- [Here 24/7](#): Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- [OK2BME](#): set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 x213

Full details can be found online on the Faculty of Arts [website](#). Download [UW and regional mental health resources \(PDF\)](#). Download the [WatSafe app](#) to your phone to quickly access mental health support information.

Accommodations and Accessibility:

The [AccessAbility](#) Services office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term. Please also let me know if there's anything I can do to help.

Academic Integrity:

To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo and its Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo (AFIW) are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. See [the UWaterloo Academic Integrity](#) webpage for more information.

Discipline:

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [University of Waterloo Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Grievance:

A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances](#).

Appeals:

A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Appeals](#).

Course Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 1	May 2 Classes begin	May 3	May 4 read Macrorie – The Poison Fish	May 5	May 6	May 7	May 8
Week 2	May 9 read Speak, Memory	May 10	May 11 read Endemicity is Meaningless	May 12	May 13	May 14	May 15
Week 3	May 16 read Hayot – How Do Readers Work?	May 17	May 18	May 19	May 20 Article Rough Draft	May 21	May 22
Week 4	May 23 Victoria Day	May 24	May 25	May 26	May 27 Article Peer Review	May 28	May 29
Week 5	May 30	May 31	June 1	June 2	June 3 Article Due	June 4	June 5
Week 6	June 6 read Autonomous Vehicles Report	June 7	June 8	June 9	June 10	June 11	June 12
Week 7	June 13	June 14	June 15	June 16	June 17 Email Proposal Due	June 18	June 19
Week 8	June 20	June 21	June 22	June 23	June 24	June 25	June 26
Week 9	June 27	June 28	June 29	June 30 Report Rough Draft	July 1 Canada Day	July 2	July 3
Week 10	July 4	July 5	July 6	July 7	July 8 Report Peer Review	July 9	July 10
Week 11	July 11	July 12 Last day to drop with WD.	July 13	July 14	July 15 Written Report Due	July 16	July 17
Week 12	July 18 Oral Presentations	July 19	July 20 Oral Presentations	July 21	July 22	July 23	July 24
Week 13	July 25 LAST CLASS	July 26 Lectures end. Revisions Due	July 27	July 28	July 29 Exam period begins	July 30	July 31