

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
English 378 / Math Elective 300 (046)
Professional Communication in Statistics and Actuarial Science (Spring 2021)

Instructor Information

Instructor: Mike Lesiuk
Email: mlesiuk@uwaterloo.ca
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Course Description

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 on LEARN (or I'll link to it *from* LEARN).

Course Requirements and Assignments

Main Assignments (60%)	1 – Written Article for Non-Specialists (20%)	June 4 <i>(final-for-now)</i> August 5 <i>(revision)</i>
	2 – Oral Presentation (20%)	June 30 <i>(final-for-now)</i> August 5 <i>(revision)</i>
	3 – Written Report for (20%)	July 30
Discussion & Workshopping (40%)	Small weekly exercises or tasks (discussion forum posts, easy quizzes, peer feedback, rough draft, etc.)	~2-6 pts per week <i>total will always be 40%</i>

How This Course Will Work

Since this is a “remote” course, we won’t have the chance to meet in-person twice per week, and so the course requirements and assignments have been designed accordingly.

In particular, I’ve organized this course on a weekly basis. Each week there will be **Discussion & Workshopping** that will replace our face-to-face class time and will complement and support the **Main Assignments**. The tasks I ask you to do for the Discussion & Workshopping part of the course will help you with your main assignments, just like our in-class face-to-face workshops normally would. (This will also help prevent procrastination.) Every week, there will be a few short videos and/or readings to do before submitting any of your weekly discussion responses. I will give you a checklist each week so you know what there is to read, watch or check out, and where to post or submit your responses. These will be graded according to very simple rubrics. **If you do them, the minimum grade is A-minus.** Even if you get some things objectively “wrong” you won’t get below an A-minus. This is because I’d rather you take risks and experiment than “play it safe” because you’re worrying about the grade.

Every week, all the lectures, content, discussion forums, quizzes, dropboxes for that week will become available on Monday morning. Anything you need to submit will be due by 11:59 p.m. on Friday.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week							



things opens up



Everything for that week is due 11:59 p.m.

Main Assignments (60%)

This course — the videos, the discussions, the smaller weekly “to do’s,” and so on — will be organized around helping you complete the three “main” assignments:

1 - Written Article for Non-Specialists

2 - Oral Presentation

3 - Written Report

These will be submitted via the dropboxes; the two written assignments should be in **.docx**, **.doc** or **.rtf** formats, and the oral presentation should be in **.mp4**, **.mkv**, **.avi** or **.mov**. As we approach the due dates, I'll include guidelines for the assignments and I'll also discuss the assignments in the course “lecture” videos I release week-to-week.

You will 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. Assignments 2 and 3 will both be about the same topic of your choosing (but presented in different forms to different audiences).

Note: The first and second assignments begin with a “**final-for-now**” grade. That is, at the end of the semester, you will be allowed to hand in a revision for these and I will re-grade them completely. The new grade will completely replace the old grade (minus any late penalties, which can’t be removed!) and you cannot get a lower grade on the revision, no matter what. Even if you make an assignment worse, somehow, your grade cannot go down. This means you have nothing to lose in taking risks or trying something new with the assignment.

Late Work

For the three **Main Assignments**, there is a 5% penalty per day late. Please note that this applies to the final-for-now due dates as well, and that the revisions cannot get rid of a late penalty that was applied originally to a final-for-now version. This means it makes sense to submit a draft you’re not happy with. (You can fix a draft later, but you can’t get rid of the late penalty!)

The tasks for our **Weekly Discussion & Workshopping** have a 15% per day late penalty. (This means that after a few days, it’s best to just forget about it.) This penalty is quite high because, again, I want to encourage you to just submit your response, even if you’re not yet happy with it. (Remember, if it’s an honest effort, the minimum is an A-minus. So just submit it!)

I do grant extensions on a case-by-case basis. Email me. Be professional. Generally, my real concern is that work does not pile up for you and that you are able to finish the semester.

Preliminary Schedule

NOTE: There will almost assuredly be minor changes to the exact topics, depending on how students are doing and what I think would help them most. The due dates for the three main assignments — anything in *green* — will stay consistent.

Week	Date	Topic	Deadline?
1	May 10-14	Welcome	
2	May 17-21	Rhetoric & Audience 101	
3	May 25-28	“Subtle Signals” (and what you’re <u>really</u> communicating)	<i>Rough Draft for Article Due</i>
4	May 31-June 4	Revising	<i>Written Article</i> Friday, June 4 (final-for-now)
5	June 7-11	Emails, proposals and... “difficult” bosses	
6	June 14-18	Rhetorical precis and summary	
7	June 21-25	Oral practice: “Do it badly, do it well.”	
8	June 28-30	Oral presentations + switching to reports <i>Note: shortened week</i>	<i>Oral Presentations</i> Friday, June 30 (final-for-now)
9	July 5-9	The report genre	
10	July 12-16	How formatting and design can help you communicate	<i>Rough Draft for Report Due</i>
11	July 19-23	Peer Feedback	
12	July 26-30	Revising	<i>Written Report</i> Friday, July 30
12.5	August 3-5	Wrap-up <i>Note: shortened week</i>	<i>Revisions</i> Wednesday, Aug 5

Other Important Information

Academic Integrity:

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.]

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](http://www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/upload_file/PLCY_AOM_Student-Petitions-and-Grievances_20151211-SJUSCapproved.pdf), www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/upload_file/PLCY_AOM_Student-Petitions-and-Grievances_20151211-SJUSCapproved.pdf. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the St. Jerome's Advising Specialist, Student Affairs Office, who will provide further assistance.

Discipline:

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.] 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 instructor, 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](http://www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Discipline_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf), www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Discipline_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to University of Waterloo Policy 71, Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. For typical penalties, check the Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm.

Appeals:

A decision made or penalty imposed under the [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances](http://www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Petitions-and-Grievances_20151211-SJUSCapproved.pdf) (other than a petition) or the [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline](http://www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Discipline_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf) 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](http://www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Appeals_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf), www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Appeals_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf.

Note for students with disabilities:

[AccessAbility Services](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/), located in Needles Hall (Room 1401) at the University of Waterloo, 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 AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term, www.uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/.

Mental Health Support:

The Faculty of Math encourages students to seek out mental health support if needed.

On-campus Resources:

- Campus Wellness <https://uwaterloo.ca/campus-wellness/>
- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca/ 519-888-4567 ext 32655
- MATES: one-to-one peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and Counselling Services: mates@uwaterloo.ca
- Health Services: located across the creek from the Student Life Centre, 519-888-4096.

Off-campus Resources:

- Good2Talk (24/7): Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- 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 extension 213

Diversity:

It is our intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, and that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class. We recognize the immense value of the diversity in identities, perspectives, and contributions that students bring, and the benefit it has on our educational environment. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let us know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In particular:

- We will gladly honour your request to address you by an alternate/preferred name or gender pronoun. Please advise us of this preference early in the semester so we may make appropriate changes to our records.
- We will honour your religious holidays and celebrations. Please inform of us these at the start of the course.
- We will follow AccessAbility Services guidelines and protocols on how to best support students with different learning needs.