Course Outline

CMNS 3240-01 - 3 Credits
Advanced Professional Communication
Fall 2026
Tuesdays 1:00-2:15 1751 Old Main
Thursdays 1:00-2:15 1741 Old Main
Old Main 2632

The campuses of Thompson Rivers University are located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Secwepemc Nation within Secwepemcul'ecw. As we share knowledge, teaching, learning and research within this university, we recognize that this territory has always been a place of teaching, learning and research.

Instructor: Christine Adam **E-Mail:** cadam@tru.ca
Office: 1841 Old Main
Office Hours: Wednesday afternoons or by appointment

Calendar Description

Students develop best practice skills in advanced professional writing with an emphasis on the design and production of strategic and planning-level communication documents, including a formal report, with added emphasis on online communication contexts, including multimedia production and social media. In addition, students consider and develop multi-phased communication strategies, learn advanced research skills and consider techniques for effective collaboration. Prerequisites: CMNS 1290 OR CMNS 1291 AND Completion of 42 credits Note: Students cannot receive credit for more than one of CMNS 3240, BBUS 3631 AND CMNS 3241

Course Description

In this course, students develop advanced professional communication skills through analysis, strategy, and production. Students apply an eight-question rhetorical framework to audit a professional communication artifact, translate their findings into a strategic communications plan, and produce and defend a package of communication deliverables. Emphasis is placed on articulating language and design choices in relation to rhetorical situation and audience, and on the changing role of AI in professional communication practice.

Educational Objectives/Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

(1) Apply a rhetorical framework — exigence, audience, purpose, discourse community, rhetorical appeals, content, structure, and design — to analyze professional communication artifacts.

(2) Articulate language and design choices in relation to rhetorical situation and audience.

(3) Translate rhetorical analysis into a strategic communications plan responsive to audience and purpose.

(4) Deliver a professional oral presentation of a strategic communications plan.

(5) Produce and defend a package of communication deliverables, accounting for content, structure, and design decisions.

Prerequisites

CMNS 1290 or CMNS 1291, and completion of 42 credits. Students cannot receive credit for more than one of CMNS 3240, BBUS 3631, and CMNS 3241.

Texts/Materials

Course materials will be provided via Moodle, organized by unit.

Student Evaluation

Students select a grade weighting track in Week 3: Track A (Writing), Track B (Strategy), or Track C (Presentation). The track selected determines the weighting of each assessment, as shown in the shaded rows below.

Assessment	Track A (Writing)	Track B (Strategy)	Track C (Presentation)
Entry Diagnostic + Goal-Setting	10%	10%	10%
Journals ×5 (scaffolded)	25%	25%	25%
Unit 1: Communications Audit	30%	15%	15%
Unit 2: Plan Presentation	15%	20%	30%
Unit 3: Package + Defense	20%	30%	20%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Course Topics

- Entry Sequence (Sept 10 – Sept 24): Students survey their starting point in professional communication, explore the changing professional communications landscape in groups, and set personal learning goals. Track selection occurs in Week 3.
    - Submission: Entry diagnostic + goal-setting freewrite.
- Unit 1 – Audit (Sept 29 – Oct 15): Students apply the eight-question rhetorical framework to analyze a professional communication artifact.
    - Key concepts: exigence, audience, purpose, discourse community, rhetorical appeals, content, structure, design.
    - Submission: Communications Audit.
- Unit 2 – Plan Presentation (Oct 20 – Nov 10): Students develop a communications plan responding to their audit findings and present it in a small panel.
    - Key concepts: strategic communication, oral argument, presentation delivery.
    - Submission: Communications Plan Presentation.
- Unit 3 – Package + Defense (Nov 17 – Dec 1): Students produce communication deliverables drawn from their plan and defend their content, structure, and design choices in a panel.
    - Key concepts: content, structure, and design as production decisions.
    - Submission: Communications Package + Defense (Group 1, Dec 1).
- Buffer / Wrap (Dec 3 – Dec 8): Remaining students defend in Group 2, followed by a course wrap session connecting back to the entry goal-setting freewrite.
    - Submission: Communications Package + Defense (Group 2, Dec 3).

Methods for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition

Students with relevant prior learning in professional communication may contact the instructor to discuss assessment options consistent with TRU policy.

Use of Technology

This course draws on written, visual, and oral communication artifacts and is delivered in an in-person format using Moodle for submissions. Students are expected to engage critically with AI's role in professional communication as both a subject of analysis and a tool in their own workflow; use of AI for assessed work must be disclosed and aligned with course policy, which will be discussed in the first week of class.

Class Cancellations

Note that I do not anticipate any class cancellations. If something unforeseen occurs and I need to cancel class, I will place an announcement in Moodle as soon as possible.

Accessibility Services

TRU's Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Policy (BRD 10-0) outlines the university's responsibilities to provide accommodations for students with disabilities. Accessibility Services at TRU provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact Accessibility Services at 250-828-5023 or as@tru.ca for support. Students and faculty now have access to a user-friendly student services portal. After students are approved for academic accommodations for the upcoming semester, they can log into the student services portal with their TRU credentials and send their accommodation letter directly to their instructor(s). See Accessibility Services for more information.

Academic Honesty and Attendance

Students must be familiar with and follow the following TRU policies:

- Academic Integrity, Policy ED-5-0. Resources for compliance with this policy can be found at the Academic Integrity Centre website.
- Student Attendance, Policy ED 3-1

Students should expect these policies to be enforced in this course. All policies can be found online at https://www.tru.ca/policy.html