

October 15, 2026

CMNS 3240
Advanced Professional Communication – Fall 2026

Photo by Vitaly Gariev on Unsplash

News and events

Every Monday 9:30-10:15 Every Wednesday 2:00-2:45
1522 Old Main
Yoga for Self Regulation

Thursday, October 15 9:30-11:30 a.m.
Old Main
Therapy Dog Thursdays

Thursday, October 15 3:00-4:00 p.m.
Old Main
Find Your Path workshop

Thursday, October 15 6:30-9:00 p.m.
4000 IB
TRU Observatory Nights



Territorial Acknowledgement



Where we're going today

- Schedule changes
- A memo is a briefing
- Header and structure
- Subheadings as findings
- Language: describe vs. explain
- Pairs: memo check-in
- Before Monday, 9:00 a.m.

Schedule changes

- Tuesday, October 13: class cancelled
- Journal 1 feedback back to you by Friday, October 16, 12:00 p.m.
- Audit memo now due Monday, October 19, 9:00 a.m.
- Read your Journal 1 feedback before you submit the memo.

A memo is a briefing

- Your reader: a manager or client who hasn’t studied the artifact
- They read the opening, then decide how much more to read.
- So your claim goes first. Background comes later, if at all.
- Every section answers one question “So what,” for this reader?

The header

- TO: the manager or client, with name and title
- FROM: your name
- DATE: October 19, 2026
- SUBJECT: specific enough to preview your argument
- Weak: “Communications audit”
- Strong: “CrowdStrike’s first post served IT teams, not travellers”

Structure that carries an argument

- Opening: your claim, plus the 3–4 dimensions you'll use
- One subheading per dimension
- Each section: claim, quoted evidence, what it does, for whom
- Close: your verdict. "Works for X, fails for Y" is fine if you argue it.

Subheadings as findings

- Weak: “Audience”
- Strong: “The post speaks to IT teams and leaves travellers out”
- Weak: “Appeals”
- Strong: “Accurate facts, but no apology”
- A manager who reads only your subheadings should get your argument.

Language for a manager

- Lead with the point. Cut the warm-up sentence.
- Drop “I think” and “it seems” when you have the evidence.
- Quote the exact phrase. Name the exact image or layout choice.
- Use the framework terms, then say what they mean here.
- One idea per paragraph.

Describe vs. explain

- Describes: “The post says the issue has been identified and a fix deployed.”
- Explains: “‘Identified, isolated and a fix has been deployed’ closes the problem for IT readers, but gives a stranded traveller no timeline.”
- What changed: a named feature, the work it does, and for whom
- Evidence and explanation: 10 of 30 points, the biggest criterion

Pairs: memo check-in

- Swap your header, opening paragraph, and subheadings.
- Does the subject line preview the argument?
- Does the opening claim say what you’re arguing?
- Do the subheadings, read alone, make the case?
- Find one sentence that describes instead of explains.

Before Monday, 9:00 a.m.

- Friday, October 16, noon: Journal 1 feedback returned
- Read it against your memo draft.
- Monday, October 19, 9:00 a.m.: audit memo due in Moodle
- 1,200–1,500 words, 3–4 dimensions, memo header
- Tuesday, October 20: Bring one key finding from your audit.

Exit ticket

- Write your memo’s subject line.
- Copy one sentence from your draft that describes. Rewrite it to explain.
- Email it to Chris: cadam@tru.ca