

# PLAN 102: Professional Communication

*Communicate effectively in the planning profession and beyond*

**Professor: C.L. Mitchell, PhD**

Office hours: Wednesdays 12:30 - 1:30pm in EV3 3241,  
or by appointment: [carrie.mitchell@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:carrie.mitchell@uwaterloo.ca)

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## Calendar description

This is a practical introduction to written communications and oral presentations as they are used in the Planning profession. Report writing, correspondence and interaction with the media are among the forms of communication considered. Students complete both written and oral assignments. Considerable critical comment is provided on assignment content as well as on technical aspects such as style and grammar. *Anti-req: ENVS 130, 131*

## Introduction

The profession of planning in contemporary cities is a constantly evolving puzzle. Being an effective planner means understanding and negotiating peoples' varied interests within in the context of existing policies and plans, defined codes of professional practice, and evolving political economies and social mores. Moreover, today's planners must consider the implications of global environmental uncertainty for cities and their constituents in a way that previous generations of planners did not. This requires a varied skill set, which you will acquire through university courses and co-operative education placements. **This course aims to provide the foundation of the**

**planning puzzle: effective communication.** In this course we focus on four key elements to effective communication: 1) writing skills; 2) speaking and listening skills; 3) teamwork and interpersonal skills; and 4) evidence-based problem solving skills. The lectures, tutorials, and team and individual assignments that make up this course all contribute to your development in these four areas of professional communication.



## Intended Learning Objectives (ILOs)

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- ✚ Write clear, concise, and properly formatted planning reports and proposals using grammatically correct English;
- ✚ Develop capacity to speak and listen professionally with peers and superiors (e.g. teaching assistants, professors, and potential employers);
- ✚ Recognize and utilize different types of evidence (e.g. peer-review, grey literature, and media sources) to justify an environmental problem/issue and develop a proposed solution; and,
- ✚ Apply contextually appropriate professional skills taught in the course (textbook, lectures, and tutorials) in professional settings.



## Course design

This course is designed around the concept of **experiential learning**, or the process of learning through experience. The major assignment for PLAN 102 is to develop a team proposal and video for the EduTOX video challenge (<https://edutox.ca/home>). Using design thinking protocol, students will propose an innovative idea to motivate action on climate change and health. This experiential learning component of PLAN 102 contributes to all four intended learning objectives (ILOs) of the course.



## Course format

This course consists of a weekly lecture and tutorial. The lectures provide an introduction and opportunity to discuss key concepts, while the tutorials are designed to enable students the opportunity to *apply* concepts in small groups.

Lectures will be held weekly in **AL 113 on Fridays from 10:30am – 12:20pm**. Check LEARN for your tutorial section/time. Tutorials start the second week of classes.

## Students' professional responsibilities in PLAN 102:

- 1) Attend both the lecture and tutorial each week of the semester;
- 2) Arrive on time and be respectful of fellow classmates, teaching assistants, and professor;
- 3) Use computers and/or other devices for academic purposes only during lectures and tutorials;
- 4) Participate in the course by actively, and respectfully, listening and speaking; and,
- 5) Read relevant textbook chapters before tutorials and lectures.

Students who consistently fail to adhere to the above-mentioned responsibilities will lose their participation grade and be referred to the Director, School of Planning, or Associate Dean Undergraduate for disciplinary action.

## Required textbook

Luchuk, D. 2016. *Successful business communication: bridging the gap, Second edition*. Oxford University Press: Don Mills, 1- 418.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Questions about the course and/or assignments should be posted to LEARN in the frequently asked questions (FAQs) forum. The professor, teaching assistants, and/or fellow classmates can view and answer your posting(s).


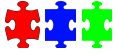








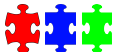

## Email policy





Questions about the course and/or assignments should be posted to the LEARN FAQ forum; questions about grades should be discussed with your teaching assistant and/or professor **in person**. If emailing the professor and/or teaching assistants, please use "PLAN 102" in the subject line, and write in a formal business style with appropriate salutations, as outlined in chapter 2 of your textbook. Expect a response within 48 hours for emails that follow these guidelines. Emails that do not follow these guidelines will be returned to students.

## English Language Proficiency Exam (ELPE)











The Faculty of Environment requires that all students have a basic competency in written English in order to be successful in their university studies and to qualify for a degree. The English Language Proficiency Examination (ELPE) is a diagnostic exam intended to determine the level of a student's ability in written English. If Planning students achieve a grade of 65% or higher in PLAN 102, they will have met the English language proficiency requirements and will not be required to write the ELPE. Please consult your academic advisor if you have any questions regarding the ELPE.





## Schedule of Lectures

| Week           | Topic (T) / Activity (A) / Guest lectures (GL) / Bonus activities (BA) / Homework (HW)   | Reading(s)  | Contribution to ILOs  |
|----------------|--|---|---|
| 1:<br>Sept. 8  | <b>T1: Introduction to course</b><br><b>T2: Design thinking for planning innovation (Assignment 1a,b,&amp;c)</b><br>A2: problem identification<br><b>BA1: Engage with your community</b>   | Syllabus  |    |
| 2:<br>Sept. 15 | <b>T1: Support services on the UW campus</b><br><b>T2: Taking good notes/reading strategically in university and beyond</b><br>GLs: Library/Writing Services/Student Success<br><b>BA2: Ask for help on campus</b>   | Ch. 1   |    |
| 3:<br>Sept. 22 | <b>T1: Online professionalism</b><br>A1: <i>The price of shame</i><br><b>T2: Empathize with your users' for planning innovation</b><br>A2: Stage 1 of the design thinking process: "empathize" activity<br>HW: Take the implicit bias test ( <a href="https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/">https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/</a> ) | Ch. 2   |    |
| 4:<br>Sept. 29 | <b>T1: Team work and group dynamics (Assignment 1a)</b><br>A1: Review of implicit bias self-reflection exercise<br><b>T2: Defining your users' problem(s)</b><br>A2: Stage 2 of the design thinking process: "define" worksheet  | Ch. 6 & 7   |    |
| 5:<br>Oct. 6   | <b>T1: Facts versus 'Alternative Facts': evaluating evidence in university and beyond</b><br><b>T2: "Gamestorming" for planning innovation</b><br>A2: Stage 3 of the design thinking process: "ideate" worksheet   | Ch. 5   |    |
| 6:<br>Oct. 13  | <b>T1: Design Thinking in practice: The GreenHouse experience</b><br>GL: Lexi Salt, GreenHouse Program Coordinator<br>A1: Stage 4 of the design thinking process: "prototype" worksheet<br>A2: Constructive mid-term feedback survey   | Ch. 8   |    |
| 7:<br>Oct.20   | <b>T1: Speaking clearly for different audiences: YOUR pitch (Assignment 1c)</b><br>A1: Review of mid-term feedback results   | Ch. 12  |  |
| 8:<br>Oct. 27  | <b>T: Professionalism in planning practice</b><br>GL: TBD<br><b>BA3: Asking good questions</b>   | Ch. 13<br>recommended   |  |
| 9:<br>Nov. 3   | <b>T1: Design Thinking in situ (Assignment 2)</b><br>A1: Great places in Canada  | <a href="http://greatplacesincanada.ca">http://greatplacesincanada.ca</a> |  |
| 10:<br>Nov. 10 | <b>T: Professionalism in planning practice</b><br>GL: Leslie Woo, Chief Planning Officer, Metrolinx<br><b>BA4: Asking good questions</b>   | Ch. 14<br>recommended   |  |
| 11:<br>Nov. 17 | <b>T: Group video pitches: highlights from tutorials</b><br>A1: giving constructive feedback<br><b>BA4: expressing gratitude</b>   | n/a   |  |
| 12:<br>Nov. 24 | <b>T: Final test: connections to CIP code of professional conduct</b><br>A1: PLAN 102 evaluations  | n/a   |  |




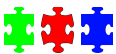





**IO key:**  Write clear, concise, and properly formatted planning reports and proposals using grammatically correct English;  Develop capacity to speak and listen professionally with peers and superiors (e.g. teaching assistants, professors, and potential employers);  Recognize and utilize different types of evidence (e.g. peer-review, grey literature, and media sources) to justify an environmental problem/issue and develop a proposed solution; and,  Apply contextually appropriate professional skills taught in the course (textbook, lectures, and tutorials) in professional settings.





## Schedule of Tutorials

| Week                    | Topic (T) / Activity (A) / Homework (HW)   | Course assignments (CA)/ Bonus activities (BA)   | Contribution to ILOs  |
|-------------------------|--|--|---|
| 1:<br>Sept.<br>15 & 18  | <b>T: Introductions</b> ( <i>group formation for Assignment 1</i> )<br>A1: Students' expectation of course, professor, and teaching assistants<br>A2: group formation; problem sharing   | BA1: <i>Engage with your community</i> on Sept. 17th 12pm - 5pm (volunteer for one hour; check in with TA and take/upload a selfie) and 250-word reflection on Science in the Square event. Due Sept. 17th at 11:59pm. |    |
| 2:<br>Sept.<br>22 & 25  | <b>T: Empathize</b><br>A1: Individual empathy map (submit to TA)<br>A2: Group problem selection; begin group empathy map<br>HW: complete Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) before next tutorial ( <a href="https://www.16personalities.com">https://www.16personalities.com</a> ) |  |    |
| 3:<br>Sept. 29 & Oct. 2 | <b>T: Define</b><br>A1: Group SWOT on personalities worksheet<br>A2: Group "stage 2, define" consolidation worksheet   | CA: <b>Assign. 1a (group contract)</b> due on <b>October 6th</b> by 11:59pm  |    |
| 4:<br>Oct.<br>6 & 9     | <b>No tutorials; Thanksgiving holiday</b>  |  |   |
| 5:<br>Oct.<br>13 & 16   | <b>T: Ideate</b><br>A1: Group "stage 3, ideate" consolidation worksheet  |  |    |
| 6:<br>Oct.<br>20 & 23   | <b>T: Prototype</b><br>A1: Group "stage 4, prototype" consolidation worksheet<br>HW: Stage 5: write 250- 500 words about your proposed idea.   | HW: submit your write-up to your teaching assistant no later than <b>Oct. 19th, 11:59pm</b> (please submit your document without your names)   |  |
| 7:<br>Oct.<br>27 & 30   | <b>T: Test</b><br>A1: Group "stage 5, test" consolidation worksheet (peer review of ideas)   |  |  |
| 8:<br>Nov.<br>3 & 6     | <b>T: Communicate, part 1</b><br>A1: Group video prep time   | CA: <b>Assign. 1b</b> due on <b>Nov 5th</b> by <b>11:59pm</b>  |  |
| 9:<br>Nov.<br>10 & 13   | <b>T: Communicate, part 2</b><br>A1: YOUR personal pitch   |  |  |
| 10:<br>Nov.<br>17 & 20  | <b>T: Implement</b><br>A1: Video evaluations   | CA: <b>Assign. 1c</b> upload to Youtube and EduTOX website by <b>Nov. 13th</b> by <b>11:59pm</b>   |  |
| 11:<br>Nov.<br>24 & 27  | <b>T: Tutorial wrap-up</b><br>A1: Teaching assistant evaluations   | CA: Assignment 2 due by <b>November 27th</b> at <b>11:59pm</b>   |  |

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## Evaluation

| Course components   | Due dates  | Component value | Contribution to ILOs  |
|---|--|-----------------|---|
| <b>Assignment 1: Team proposal</b><br>(relevant textbook chapters: 1, 4, 5, 6, 11, & 12)  |  |                 |    |
| <i>1a: Group contract</i>   | October 6th  | 5%              |    |
| <i>1b: Group proposal and peer evaluation</i>   | November 5th   | 20%             |    |
| <i>1c: Group video pitch</i>  | November 13th  | 15%             |    |
| <b>Assignment 2: Individual report</b><br>(relevant textbook chapters: 4 & 8)   | November 27th  | 20%             |    |
| <b>Lecture participation</b> (Weekly professional participation and completion of activity reflections/worksheets determines lecture participation grade)   | Weekly professional participation and activity/ worksheet submission /12 weeks | 15%             |    |
| <b>Tutorial participation</b> (Weekly professional participation and completion of activity reflections/worksheets determines tutorial participation grade) | Weekly professional participation and activity/ worksheet submission /11 weeks | 15%             |   |
| <b>Final test</b><br>(Relevant textbook chapters: 1- 12; CIP code of conduct)   | November 24th  | 10%             |  |
| <b>Challenge Game</b>   | Throughout term  | Up to 3%        |  |

**ILO key:**  Write clear, concise, and properly formatted planning reports and proposals using grammatically correct English;  Develop capacity to speak and listen professionally with peers and superiors (e.g. teaching assistants, professors, and potential employers);  Recognize and utilize different types of evidence (e.g. peer-review, grey literature, and media sources) to justify an environmental problem/issue and develop a proposed solution; and,  Apply contextually appropriate professional skills taught in the course (textbook, lectures, and tutorials) in professional settings.

Assignments and relevant challenges should be **uploaded to LEARN no later than 11:59pm** on the dates listed above using the following format: **PLAN 102\_yoursurname(s).docx**. All assignments and challenge game activities will be graded within two weeks of being uploaded to LEARN. Assignment will be graded with the following rubric: Content: 50%; Grammar/mechanics: 25%; Style/tone: 15%; and Format: 10%. We reserve the right to assign different grades to different group members.

**Late penalty:** Assignments are due on the date and time set by the professor. Teaching assistants are not allowed to change the due dates. The first day an assignment is late brings about a **10% penalty**. An additional 10% penalty is assessed for each additional late day, including weekends. If a student's assignment is more than 7 days late it will not be accepted and a grade of zero will be recorded for that assignment. Requests for exemptions or compassionate considerations should be discussed in advance with professor, or as soon as possible.

**Readability and clarity:** Students are expected to present well organized, and properly written work. If you assignment is deemed unreadable by a teaching assistant, you will be required to revise and resubmit within 48 hours.

## PLAN 102 COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGE GAME

*The more you play the more you win!  
Develop the professional skills employers crave!  
The most fun you've ever had learning!*



**Objective:** Earn as many ‘experience points’ as possible over the course of the semester to gain bonus marks and boost your final grade in PLAN 102!

**Rationale:** Professional planners work in an environment where communications skills are critical for success. Those who get ahead are often people with the professional skills employers demand. This game will help you develop professional skills you will need in a positive classroom environment.

### Rules of the game:

- 1) Experience points are awarded to individuals, and are worth up to 3% extra for your final PLAN 102 grade (i.e. if you earn 77% in the class, and earn full experience points throughout the term, you would finish PLAN 102 with a final grade of 80%).
- 2) The professor will decide the final bonus marks allocated to students. All decisions are final.
- 3) Each of the four challenges is worth five points, for a total of 20 points over the semester. Instructions for how to complete each challenge are available on LEARN and will be discussed in class.
- 4) The final allocation of bonus marks is as follows:

| Points earned | Bonus earned |
|---------------|--------------|
| 20            | 3%           |
| 17 - 19.9     | 2%           |
| 15 - 16.9     | 1%           |

- 5) This game should be fun; there are no losers. The more you play the more you win (by developing skills employers will value)!



### ◆ Intellectual Property:

Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of their instructor, TA, and/or the University of Waterloo. Intellectual property includes items such as:

- Lecture content, spoken and written (and any audio/video recording thereof);
- Lecture handouts, presentations, and other materials prepared for the course (e.g., PowerPoint slides);
- Questions or solution sets from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams); and
- Work protected by copyright (e.g., any work authored by the instructor or TA or used by the instructor or TA with permission of the copyright owner).

Course materials and the intellectual property contained therein, are used to enhance a student's educational experience. However, sharing this intellectual property without the intellectual property owner's permission is a violation of intellectual property rights. For this reason, it is necessary to ask the instructor, TA and/or the University of Waterloo for permission before uploading and sharing the intellectual property of others online (e.g., to an online repository).

Permission from an instructor, TA or the University is also necessary before sharing the intellectual property of others from completed courses with students taking the same/similar courses in subsequent terms/years. In many cases, instructors might be happy to allow distribution of certain materials. However, doing so without expressed permission is considered a violation of intellectual property rights.

Please alert the instructor if you become aware of intellectual property belonging to others (past or present) circulating, either through the student body or online. The intellectual property rights owner deserves to know (and may have already given their consent).

### ◆ 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. The University's guiding principles on academic integrity can be found here: <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity>. ENV students are strongly encouraged to review the material provided by the university's Academic Integrity office specifically for students: <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/Students/index.html>

Students are also expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their actions. Students who are unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who need help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. Students may also complete the following tutorial: <https://uwaterloo.ca/library/get-assignment-and-research-help/academic-integrity/academic-integrity-tutorial>

When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline: <https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71>. Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve; refer to Policy #70, Student Grievance: <https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70>

◆ **Note for students with disabilities:** [AccessAbility Services](#), located in Needles Hall, Room 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 [AccessAbility Services](#) at the beginning of each academic term.

◆ **Mental Health:** The University of Waterloo, the Faculty of Environment and our Departments/Schools consider students' well-being to be extremely important. We recognize that throughout the term students may face health challenges - physical and / or emotional. **Please note that help is available.**

Mental health is a serious issue for everyone and can affect your ability to do your best work. Counselling Services <http://www.uwaterloo.ca/counselling-services> is an inclusive, non-judgmental, and confidential space for anyone to seek support. They offer confidential counselling for a variety of areas including anxiety, stress management, depression, grief, substance use, sexuality, relationship issues, and much more.

- ◆ **Religious Observances:** Students need to inform the instructor at the beginning of term if special accommodation needs to be made for religious observances that are not otherwise accounted for in the scheduling of classes and assignments.
- ◆ **Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. See Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm). When in doubt please contact your Undergraduate Advisor for details.
- ◆ **Appeals:** A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 – (Student Discipline) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals) [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm)
- ◆ **Unclaimed assignments:**  
Unclaimed assignments will be retained for one month after term grades become official in quest. After that time, they will be destroyed in compliance with UW's [confidential shredding procedures](#).
- ◆ **Communications with Instructor and Teaching Assistants:**  
All communication with students must be through either the student's University of Waterloo email account or via Learn. If a student emails the instructor or TA from a personal account they will be requested to resend the email using their personal University of Waterloo email account.
- ◆ **Turnitin:** Text matching software (Turnitin®) may be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all materials and sources in assignments is documented. To better understand the meaning of 'similarity' in Turnitin, see [https://guides.turnitin.com/01\\_Manuals\\_and\\_Guides/Student/Classic\\_Student\\_User\\_Guide/17\\_Similarity\\_Check#Viewing\\_an\\_Originality\\_Report](https://guides.turnitin.com/01_Manuals_and_Guides/Student/Classic_Student_User_Guide/17_Similarity_Check#Viewing_an_Originality_Report).