University of Waterloo
Department of English Language & Literature
ENGL 193: Section 014
Communication in the Physical Sciences
Fall 2019
Mondays & Wednesdays, 1:00pm-2:20pm, STC 3014

I would like to acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, land promised and given to Six Nations, which includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.

Instructor Information:
Instructor: Devon Moriarty
Office: PAS 2212
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 11:50am – 12:50pm
Email/Skype: devon.moriarty@uwaterloo.ca

Course Description:
In this course you will learn about effective written, oral, and visual communication in the life sciences. You will have the opportunity to shape these communication skills through iterative design processes that emphasize attention to your audience, the purpose of your communications, and student agency. You will work individually and collaboratively to craft messages for internal and external audiences, including scientists, government stakeholders, affected communities, or broader publics. You will learn a variety of genres such as research reports, grant proposals, conference abstracts, conference posters, public talks, blog posts, and podcasts. Overall, this course will help you enhance your capacity to conduct research and report research findings, communicate ethically, and thereby effect important change.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes
Specifically, by the end of the course, learners should be able to:
• design, draft, and persuasively deliver scientific communications to expert and non-expert audiences;
• justify decisions about the language, content, and genre used when communicating scientific information;
• practice collaboration and peer review in support of iterative communication design processes, including revision;
• practice research processes to find, assess, document, incorporate, and cite research resources and communicate research findings;
• describe and appraise the purposes and ethical concerns of science communication.

Required Text
Major Assignments and Grade Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments &amp; Grade Breakdown</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Grade Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Science Report</td>
<td>≥2 pages</td>
<td>September 23</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>≥6 pages</td>
<td>October 11</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poster Presentatiion (group)</td>
<td>1 poster + 1-page design rationale</td>
<td>October 28</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Communication Presentation</td>
<td>≤10 minute presentation</td>
<td>November 13-25 (signup required)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Proposal</td>
<td>≥8 pages</td>
<td>December 11</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Contributions &amp; Mini Homework Assignments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
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Overview of the Course
Throughout the term you will be working with one or two scientific research papers. The topic of these papers will guide each and every assignment, although you will be reporting on this topic using a variety of genre forms which are intended for different audiences.

You must select a research article by **Wednesday, September 11** to be approved by me.

Your article must meet the following criteria:
- A research subject you are genuinely interested and perhaps, already know something about.
- A research subject that is current and established enough that you can find other articles on the subject.
- A research subject that will be of interest to both specialized and non-specialized audiences.
- A paper you understand.

**Assignment #1: Science Report (due September 23)**

Your first assignment will be a report on the state of science described in the article you have chosen. Your goal is to understand what research is presented in the article you have chosen and how it is situated in a broader research effort. Who else is working on this topic? What are they saying? What is the significance of the article that you have chosen for this research topic? First, you will want to read and re-read your article. You will need to know the general field, the topic of the article, and why that topic is important. Your report will contain the following sections:

Abstract of the article
You will write an abstract in your own words for the research article (>200 words). Although the article will have its own abstract in almost every case, your job is to write your own version of an abstract. While there are general ideas that need to make it in,
there is no one way to write an abstract and, often, abstracts are poorly written so this is a chance to improve!

Article Overview
Using the IMRaD format, summarize the findings of the article in a page or two. Don’t worry about using particular jargon. The key here is for you to explain in a complete and understandable way the key points for each section. You may find Swales’ CARS model and Toulmin’s model of argumentation useful for writing this section of your state of science report.

Bio
Your biography will initially be written for Mini-Homework Assignment #1. Your revised biography (based on in-class peer review) will be included in your Science Report.

Assignment #2: Literature Review (due October 11)
A literature review summarizes and synthesizes previously published research on a specific topic to outline existing evidence, to identify gaps in current research, and to position future research. You often see “embedded” literature reviews in research articles, but “stand-alone” literature reviews are indented to be read on their own.
In this assignment you will produce a stand-alone literature review based on the topic of your research article. You will be following the structure introduced in class to provide a thorough and logical review of your scientific research topic.
Your assignment will:
• be at least 6 pages, double spaced
• include an introduction that demonstrates the importance of the topic and outlines the direction of the review
• include a body that synthesizes and analyzes sources in a coherent and logical manner
• include a conclusion that indicates what your analysis tells you about the topic
• includes a reference list containing at least 6 references
• uses a recognized citation style (e.g. ACM, IEEE, APA, etc. Please consult the appropriate research guide for your department.)

Assignment #3: Poster Presentation (due October 28)
Did you know there are often prizes for the best poster presentation by students at academic conferences? Fame, fortune—a CV line, posters are prized among many scientific disciplines to communicate your research at annual conferences in your field. The prizes signal something important: we care about how well you’re able to present your findings. Work in the lab or on the bench doesn’t mean a whole lot until you can share it with others, and it is that sharing of findings that propels science forward. Posters, however, are a real challenge because they bring together almost every model of communication you need to master: written communication, visual communication (particularly representing data), oral communication in your short explanation of your research, and even interpersonal communication as you answer questions and possibly develop collaborations.
So far this term you’ve been working on one research article. At this point, you may have to acquaint yourself with a new research article as you will be working in groups of three on the poster presentation. I will create these groups based on how well students topics align with one another.

As soon as you are in your groups, I recommend that you take advantage of the Library’s Assignment Planner for [STEM Poster Presentations](#).

In the interim, I ask that you do a little homework. Are there posters in your field in the halls outside your labs? What is included (what seems to be excluded)? Are there great visual representations of data? Find some exemplars and be prepared to share them with the class (snap a photo!).

Prepare a poster based on one of the group member’s research article being used for the class. You can imagine you are a team of research assistants tasked with presenting your PI’s research at an annual conference. In addition to the poster itself your group will write a short summary script of the research, which you will memorize and present when someone asks about your poster (this does not need to be handed in).

Your group will also write a one-page design rationale that includes a justification for your focus, your design decisions, and that explains the importance and visual significance of any graphics you include. You should be sure that your poster is:
- Written for a poster format and not a direct quote from your Science Report
- Focused on a particular issue in the research that you’re summarizing.
- Includes graphics such as related images or visual representations of data.
- Polished and free of errors.

Criteria for Evaluation:
- Clear topic with a narrow focus.
- Well-organized poster that uses the IMRAD model.
- Clear statement of purpose, following the CARS model for the introductory paragraph.
- Technical presentation (font a readable size, visuals clear and well-placed, tables and figures labeled, references formatted according to the disciplinary citation style)
- Correct spelling and grammar (including complete sentences)
- Thorough and clear justification for design choices

**Assignment #4: Public Communication Presentation (due November 13-25; sign-up for date)**

Congratulations! You completed your initial research and now have experience presenting findings to an academic audience. Now you’re ready to report results to a
different kind of audience. You’ve been invited to give a talk at your local library about your work. Your audience could be anyone: other scientists, people interested in your topic, students, families looking for an educational opportunity, etc. Demographics include a range of learners and you’re going to have to figure out how to communicate your complex subject to a wide audience.

You will first need to decide what aspect of your topic you think will appeal to your audience. What is particularly interesting about your work and what do you most want to share with others? Then you can begin the hard work of planning a talk. You will want to figure out how much you can cover in just 10 minutes! It isn’t a long time to talk so you’re going to need to be selective about what you cover. Prepare a slideshow or some other kind of multimedia to use during your talk. If you would rather not use media to support your talk, that is okay, but you’ll want to think about performative aspects of how you’ll tell your story. Are you able to modulate your voice, do you have vivid metaphors to describe abstract concepts, and does your story follow an arc with a powerful conclusion? All these aspects should be included in everyone’s talks, but it is a challenge to do well without any supporting materials. You should be sure that your presentation is:

- No more than 10 minutes long
- Polished and practiced
- Aimed at a wide audience with different kinds of expertise

**Assignment #5: Grant Proposal - written report (due December 11)**

An important part of doing science is getting your research funded. Frequently this is through government funding agencies such as the National Science Foundation (NSF), Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), or National Institutes of Health (NIH) – although increasingly we see scientists making use of crowdfunding platforms to fund their research as well. Now that you have a strong grasp of your topic, the next step is to produce a grant proposal written to meet the expectations of a specific funding agency’s requirements. Your goal is to persuade readers – at arm’s length – that your proposed research will make a sufficiently valuable contribution or address some significant problem that it would justify the investment of funds to support your research.

**Class Contributions and Mini Homework Assignments**

**Mini Homework Assignments (10%)**

The best thing about this course is that you can earn an easy 10%. Five times throughout the term you’ll have a mini homework assignment to complete. Each is worth 2 percentage points. Earning an A on the assignment will be a breeze. All you need to do is follow the assignment guidelines (found in Teams) and complete it on time. **Mini**
homework assignments not completed on time will receive a mark of zero.

Class Contributions (10%)
Science doesn’t take place in a vacuum. It requires individuals to both listen and make thoughtful contributions; ask questions and provide constructive criticism; make mistakes and learn from those mistakes. This mark is about being an effective colleague throughout the term. It considers the quality of your participation, interactions with your peers, and attitude towards the collaborative classroom environment. Ways to get a good grade include making thoughtful contributions to the class, treating your peers with respect, having a generally positive attitude, and being responsive to feedback. Ways to get a poor grade include making “empty” contributions to class (off topic, redundant, etc.), disrespecting your peers, having a poor attitude, and being aggressively confrontational or dismissive about feedback.

Attendance (~0%)
You’re an adult who can make your own decisions including whether or not to show up to class. What I will say is that in frequently not attending class you are not only doing a disservice to yourself, but to your classmates as well. A thriving classroom environment is dependent on all members showing up and playing the game. Moreover, marks in all other categories will be affected by missing classes. Of course, everyone is fulfilling a role other than “student” and those roles sometimes take priority, so you need not explain to me when or why you are missing class. But if absences are so frequent that they are affecting your progress in this course and/or others, please consider arranging a time to discuss with your departmental Undergraduate Studies Advisor.
# Class Schedule

## Unit 1: Research & Written Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Wednesday, September 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Welcome &amp; Course Introduction</td>
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</table>
|        | *For next class:*  
|        | • Read Miller & Fahnestock, “Genres in Scientific and Technical Rhetoric”  
|        | • Read Thaiss, “Writing Rhetorically: Central to Effective STEM Communication” (pages 15-19)  
|        | *Complete Mini Homework Assignment 1 (“Short Bio”) before next class.* |

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<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Monday, September 9</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Discuss and explore Genres of Science Communication. Overview of Science Report assignment.</td>
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|        | *For next class:*  
|        | • Read Thaiss, Chapter 1: Writing to Reach Readers  
|        | *Complete Mini Homework Assignment 2 (“Research Article”) before next class.* |

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<tr>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Monday, September 16</th>
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<td></td>
<td>CARS Model for Introductions. Model of argument (Toulmin Method).</td>
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|        | *For next class:*  
|        | • Thaiss, Chapter 5: Writing the Research Article Part I: Abstract, Introduction, and Methods and Materials  
|        |        |

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<tr>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Monday, September 23</th>
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</table>
|        | Reporting Results. Reconstructing Research Articles.  
|        | **Science Report Due Today**  
|        | Submit to Teams by 11:50pm  
|        | *For next class:*  
|        | • Read Woodworth, “The Rhetorical Précis”  
|        |        |

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<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Wednesday, September 11</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Rhetoric of Science Communication: Analysis and Planning. Rhetorical analysis of our research articles.</td>
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|        | *For next class:*  
|        | • Read “How to (seriously) read a scientific paper”  
|        | • Read “Create a Research Space” (CARS) Model of Research Introductions”  

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<tr>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Wednesday, September 18</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Introduction to the IMRaD structure. Report writing exercises.</td>
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|        | *For next class:*  
|        | • Thaiss, Chapter 6: Writing the Research Article Part II: Results and Discussion  

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<tr>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Wednesday, September 25</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Visit from Science Librarian. Finding appropriate sources for research and critically appraising them. Introduction to the rhetorical précis.</td>
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|        | *For next class:*  
|        | • Read Thaiss, Chapter 7: Writing the Research Review  


# Week 5

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Monday, September 30</th>
<th>Wednesday, October 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction to the Literature Review and overview of Literature Review assignment.</td>
<td>Workshop on managing sources and the value of the annotated bibliography.</td>
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</table>

**For next class:**
No assigned readings. You should be researching for your literature review assignment.

**For next class:**
No assigned readings. Continue researching and writing for your literature review assignment.

*Complete Mini Homework Assignment 3 (“Citation & Annotation”) by end of day.

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# Unit 2: Communicating through Presentations

## Week 6

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday, October 7</th>
<th>Wednesday, October 9</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building confidence for writing in scientific genres. Introduction to the Pomodoro Technique.</td>
<td>Assigning groups and an overview of the Poster Presentation assignment.</td>
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**For next class:**
- Read Thaiss, Chapter 10: Creating Posters and Infographics
- **Literature Review due Friday, October 11**
- Submit to Teams by 11:50pm

**For next class:**
- Read Thaiss, Chapter 11: Creating Oral-Visual Presentations

## Week 7 – Reading Week – October 14 - 18

## Week 8

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<tr>
<th>Monday, October 21</th>
<th>Wednesday, October 23</th>
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**For next class:**
- Fahnestock, “Accommodating Science: The Rhetorical Life of Scientific Facts”

**For next class:**
- No assigned readings. Work on finishing your poster and practicing your presentation.

## Week 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday, October 28</th>
<th>Wednesday, October 30</th>
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</table>
| **Poster Presentations due today**
*Come with your poster ready to present and answer questions* | EDGE Program: Skills Identification & Articulation Workshop |

**For next class:**
- No assigned readings.

**For next class:**

*Complete Mini Homework Assignment 4 (“Being an Ethical Scientist”) before next class.*
### Unit 3: Public Science: Funding and Engagement

#### Week 10

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<tr>
<th>Monday, November 4</th>
<th>Wednesday, November 6</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ethics in Communication &amp; Communication Design. March for Science case study. <strong>For next class:</strong> - Read Hofmann, Chapter 20: Proposal Writing</td>
<td>How is science funded? NSERC Presentation by the Writing &amp; Communication Centre. Introduction to the Grant Proposal Assignment. <strong>For next class:</strong> - Read Sidler, &quot;The Chemistry Liveblogging Event: The Web Refigures Peer Review&quot;</td>
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#### Week 11

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<tr>
<th>Monday, November 11</th>
<th>Wednesday, November 13</th>
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<tr>
<td>Science communication online: blogs, vlogs, and reddit. <strong>Note:</strong> Throughout our presentation classes there will be no assigned readings. You should be working on your grant proposals. Start with reading the application instructions and selection committee guide for the funding agency of your choice. We will have some time set aside in each of the presentation classes to discuss any questions and/or challenges concerning the grant proposal assignment.</td>
<td>Public Communication Presentations <em>Complete Mini Homework Assignment 5 (&quot;Funding Agency&quot;) before next class.</em></td>
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#### Week 12

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<tr>
<th>Monday, November 18</th>
<th>Wednesday, November 20</th>
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<tr>
<td>Public Communication Presentations</td>
<td>Public Communication Presentations</td>
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#### Week 13

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<tr>
<th>Monday, November 25</th>
<th>Wednesday, November 27</th>
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<tr>
<td>Remaining Public Communication Presentations Tailoring grant proposals. <strong>For next class:</strong> - Strategically read Thaiss, Chapter 12 (Writing Science with Style and Styles) and 13 (Editing Sentences).</td>
<td>Grant proposal workshop. Analysis of successful grant applications. Reflect on the term and you give me feedback.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Week 14

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<tr>
<th>Monday, December 2</th>
<th>Wednesday, November 27</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SciComm Showcase Today – Details to Come</td>
<td>Grant Proposals due December 11</td>
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Course Policies

Communication
You can communicate with me in a number of ways:

1. **In-person.** You’re welcome to catch me after class or visit me in-person during my office hours.
2. **Email.** I’ll respond to your e-mail inquiry within 24 business hours. Check out this article to learn the important art of crafting appropriate e-mails: [How to Email Your Professor (without being annoying AF)](#). Please use your uwaterloo e-mail.
3. **IM in Teams.** Go to Teams → Conversations → Hover over my name → Select Chat. If it says I’m online, feel free to send me a quick message.
4. **Skype.** For inquiries that require more than a couple sentences in an e-mail or IM, you’re welcome to arrange a Skype meeting with me if you can’t make it to my office hours. Please use the Skype for Business provided to you by UW.

Grades
In accordance with University of Waterloo policy, your final grades will be assigned as a numeric value according to the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80 - 100 [A+ above 94.5; A- below 83.5]</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 - 79 [B+ above 77.5; B- below 72.5]</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 69 [C+ above 67.5; C- below 62.5]</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 59 [D+ above 57.5; D- below 52.5]</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 49 [F+ above 45.5; F- below 32.5]</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Late Penalties for the Major Assignments
Late work will be penalized 3% per day, including weekends, if an extension is not arranged with me at least one week prior to the assignment deadline. Major assignments that are submitted more than one week late will not be accepted. Exceptions to this policy are granted only for illness or emergencies, provided proper documentation is submitted to the course instructor. This policy is firm not only because organization and productivity are a part of science communication, but because progress in the course is scaffolded and is therefore dependent on prior work.

All major assignments must be submitted to the appropriate location in Teams by 11:50pm the date they are due.

Office 365
A necessary component of this course will being using the software made available to you by the University of Waterloo. Visit [UW’s Office 365 website](#) to activate your account if you haven’t done so already. You can use most o365 applications online, but having desktop applications for Teams, Word, and Outlook would be especially
useful for this class. Ours is the first class at the University of Waterloo being run through Microsoft Teams Classroom, so I do anticipate some challenges, but we have an IST professional tuned into the course to help us troubleshoot where needed.

**Standard of Work**
This is a University-level course, and you are expected to be comfortable with the mechanics of writing. This means you should be able to understand and use proper grammar, syntax, and punctuation in order to communicate effectively. If you need extra assistance with the basics of writing, it is your responsibility to come to office hours, make an appointment with me, or visit the Writing and Communication Centre.

**Submission Guidelines**
Submitted assignments will only be accepted as .doc or .docx files. Other file formats make it difficult for me to mark-up documents and provide feedback.

**EDGE Workshop**
On Wednesday, October 30, a Career Advisor from the Centre for Career Action will be facilitating a Skills Identification and Articulation Workshop. This workshop is intended to help you identify the skills you are developing throughout your undergraduate career. Upon completion of this workshop, you will be better able to recognize your skills and develop strategies for expressing these to target audiences (e.g. to potential employers in job interviews. This workshop has been tailored to the Communication in the Sciences course, so as to help you gain a deeper understanding of how class activities and concepts can be applied in a variety of employment and professional contexts. Students who are actively pursuing the EDGE certificate, or who wish to pursue the program in the future, will receive a milestone for participation in the workshop.

**Student Resources**

**Accommodations**
All students who have a permanent disability as well as those with temporary disabilities have the right to what UW calls AccessAbility Services. To register for these services, you must provide documentation from a qualified professional to verify your disability. Please contact them at 519-888-4567 ext. 35082 or drop into Needles Hall 1132 to book an appointment to meet with an advisor to discuss their services and supports.

Your success in this class is important to me. If you can’t or don’t want to go through AccessAbility Services to receive formal accommodations, but there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this class, please let me know as soon as possible. We can work together to develop strategies for adapting assignments to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

**Mental Health**
Human beings need support systems. I, along with the rest of the faculty and staff in Arts encourage you to seek out mental health support when needed. There are a number of on-campus services and resources, as well as off-campus options. The Faculty of Arts
has compiled a useful website (Get mental health support when you need it) that details resources that are available to you.

**Student Success Office**
The Student Success Office provides academic and personal development services, resources for international students, as well as study abroad and exchange support. They aim to create a vibrant student experience and help students achieve personal and professional goals. Visit the Student Success Office, drop by their office on the second floor of South Campus Hall or reach them by phone at 519-888-4567 x84410 for more information.

**Writing and Communication Centre**
The Writing and Communication Centre works across all faculties to help students clarify their ideas, develop their voices, and communicate in the style appropriate to their disciplines. Writing Centre staff offer one-on-one support in planning assignments, using and documenting research, organizing papers and reports, designing presentations and e-portfolios, and revising for clarity and coherence.

You can make multiple appointments throughout the term, or drop-in at the Dana Porter Library for quick questions or feedback. To book a 50-minute appointment and to see drop-in hours, visit the Writing and Communication Centre website.

The communication specialists guide you to see your work as readers would. They can teach you revising skills and strategies, but will not correct your work for you. Remember to bring hard copies of your assignment instructions and any notes or drafts to your appointment.

**University Policies**

**Academic Integrity**
In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. Check out the University of Waterloo’s Earn your degree the right way brochure for a brief orientation to academic integrity. See the UWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage and the ArtsAcademic 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 his/her 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 Undergraduate Associate Dean. 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. For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties.

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. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

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.