

York University
School of Public Policy and Administration
Fall 2020

COURSE OUTLINE: AP/PPAS 2195 3.0 Professional Skills and Communications

Fully On-Line – Moodle/Zoom (Synchronous delivery)

Date: Mondays 11:30pm-12:30pm ON-LINE + tutorials ON-LINE

Course Director: Dr. Peter P. Constantinou

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Office hours: Mondays 10:30am-11:30 pm or by appointment, 126 McLaughlin College

Tutorial Leader: Professor Antoinette Sarpong

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Tutorial Section	Monday - Time	Location
1	12:30pm-2:30pm	ON-LINE via Zoom
2	2:30-4:30pm	ON-LINE via Zoom
3	4:30pm-6:30pm	ON-LINE via Zoom

Students should try to meet with the instructor during the office hours. If you are not free during posted office hours, see the instructor after class or contact him via email to book an appointment. Meetings can be in person, via Skype/FaceTime or phone, as agreed upon.

Expanded Course Description

Professional and communications skills have never been more important than now. In this course you will learn key professional and communications skills related to employment and leadership in general, with a particular emphasis on the government and broader public sector. The course will help to facilitate your understanding of the workplace and to best position you for success. These skills are taught in 3 ways:

1. Readings and lectures focusing on current research and best practices
2. Role play, workshops and simulation exercises
3. Self-awareness inventories

Course Goals

The purpose of this course is to expose students to and make them aware of best practices and expectations of relevant workplaces to ensure they are prepared for practicums, co-ops, internships and employment in the public sector, not-for-profit organizations and the private sector. The course is intended to get you thinking about:

1. intrapersonal skills (Self-awareness and capacity building/development)
2. interpersonal skills
3. leadership skills
4. business/professional skills

Expected Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this course, students should be able to have

- A clear understanding of workplace expectations and ethics.
- Competence in preparation of a variety of common written documents (emails, correspondence, briefing materials and reports, including proper citation).
- Competence in preparation of presentation decks and delivery of presentations.
- Development of skills related to interviewing, teamwork, leadership, networking and other “soft skills”.

This course is delivered entirely on-line. Although it is delivered on line, it aims to replicate a classroom experience through live video lectures, presentation slide materials, on-line live discussions, and interactive forums.

Classes will comprise various formats; lecture, class discussion, workshops and simulations. Lectures will provide the context for the readings, which should be completed before the date listed. Discussions will build on the readings and lecture material and all students are expected to actively participate. In a number of instances, workshops will be conducted where students will be charged with working together in groups to produce results/answers to questions/challenges presented in class. These workshops will focus on how to conduct/prepare various analyses and government documents

About Moodle and Zoom

Moodle is the learning platform used by York University to allow us to have a personalized learning platform/environment for our course. The free site allows us to access all the materials, such as slide decks, assignments and videos, as well as a secure site for us to upload student work for assessment.

Zoom is a free video conferencing software app that allows us to engage virtually for video, presentations, group work and chat rooms. More detail about these systems will be shared at the beginning of the course. Students shall note the following:

- Zoom is hosted on servers in the U.S. This includes recordings done through Zoom.
- If you have privacy concerns about your data, provide only your first name or a nickname when you join a session.
- The system is configured in a way that all participants are automatically notified when a session is being recorded. In other words, a session cannot be recorded without you knowing about it.

Technology requirements and FAQs for Moodle can be found here - <http://www.yorku.ca/moodle/students/faq/index.html>

Teaching Methodology

Classes will comprise various formats including lecture, class discussion, role play and workshop. Lectures will provide the context for the readings, which should be completed before the date listed. Discussions will build on the readings and lecture material and all students are expected to actively participate. In a number of instances, workshops, simulations and role play will be conducted where students will be charged with working together in groups to produce results/answers to questions/challenges presented in class.

Students are strongly encouraged to prepare for class by completing the readings, participate in the discussion and take an active role in the various pedagogical methods used in the tutorials.

Class Participation and Professionalism

Class participation will be graded using the following criteria:

- **Relevance:** are your comments clearly related to the case and to the comments of others?
- **Advancement:** Do your comments move the class discussion forward or simply reiterate points that have already been made?
- **Support:** Have you used specific data from the case, from the readings, or from your personal experiences to back up the assertions that you are making?
- **Clarity:** Are your comments succinct and understandable?
- **Quantity:** Do you participate on a regular basis?

The above attempts to highlight two important parts of a good discussion: preparation (so that you can support your answers and make clear statements) and listening (so that you respond to the discussion as it unfolds). Please treat others as respected colleagues.

Professionalism will be graded on the assessment of your approach to your studies, to the assignments in and outside of class, your treatment of others and the seriousness with which you approach the requirements of the course including attention to detail. Students will understand that each of us makes an impression on others and the quality of that impression can be an important determinant of success – a variety of exercises will be undertaken to develop those ideals, and to influence those impressions.

Textbook and Required Course Materials

The following texts are required reading for the course:

1. Aamodt, M. G. and Raynes B. (2001). *Human Relations in Business: Developing Interpersonal and Leadership Skills* (1st Ed.) Publisher: Wadsworth/Thomson ISBN 0534355080 (Available as course kit in the bookstore only – Kit #9990312899)
2. Glenn, Ted. (2014). *Professional Communications in the Public Sector: A Practical Guide*. Canadian Scholars' Press (pbk. 1-55130-631-5, pdf. 978-1-55130-632-2, epub 978-1-55130-633-9)

One copy of each will be on reserve in the library. We will also provide you a number of other materials, which will be posted on the course website.

While not required reading –one of the themes that will be consistent in the course is ethics and some of the very unique challenges that public servants face in government and the broader public sector. Students are encouraged to read:

Kernaghan, K and Langford, J. (2014). *The Responsible Public Servant. Second Edition*. Institute of Public Administration of Canada.

Structure of Lectures and Tutorials

The course will be delivered in two distinct formats – lectures and tutorials.

Lectures

Each lecture will consist of a formal presentation, outlining key lessons and learning outcomes for each of the weeks and themes. In the lecture, I will raise your awareness of the application of the material from the assigned readings, present the best information we have based on the leading research, and will highlight best practices and practical realities that have emerged. The lectures will not replace the necessity to have completed your readings assigned for each week, rather, they will draw out key lessons and focus on their application. Each week lecture slides will be posted on the course website.

Tutorials

The two-hour tutorial held each week will consist of role-playing exercises, workshops and simulations. You will apply the readings and your critical thinking skills when playing your assigned role in the exercise. The purpose is to take research and theory, coupled with best practices and merge the two in an interactive and hands-on manner. The tutorial leader will also use the time to engage with students to ensure comfort with materials and allow plenty of time for questions and discussion. Tutorials will also be used to allow students to make presentations and to get feedback on writing assignments. The tutorials are critical for student success – the participation grade is 20%, which reflects the importance placed on engagement in this class.

Evaluation

Assignment	Value	Due date
Individual Writing Assignment #1 (Elevator pitch)	10%	Completed in tutorial Week 4
Individual Writing Assignment #2 (Email and other correspondence)	10%	Completed in tutorial Week 5
Individual Writing Assignment #3 (Briefing notes)	10%	Completed in tutorial Week 6
Individual Writing Assignment #4 (Cover Letter and Resume)	20%	Due Week 11 in tutorial

Class Participation and professionalism	20%	Throughout each class <i>Informal feedback will be provided regularly, but a mid-term assessment will be provided so students can track their progress.</i>
Individual Presentation #1	10%	Week 8 in tutorial
Individual Presentation #2	10%	Week 11 in tutorial
Term Test	10%	Week 12 – Take-home test

NOTE:

One of the realities of the workplace is that deadlines and due dates are firm. All assignments are expected to be handed in on time or else they will not be accepted and a mark of zero will be assigned to them. If you expect to have difficulty in completing an assignment on time, please discuss this with the instructor in advance.

Individual Writing Assignments (#1, #2 and #3 worth 10% each, #4 worth 20%)

There are four individual writing assignments that focus on different forms of products and documents. Assignments #1, #2 and #3 are assigned and completed within the tutorial, and Assignment #4 is assigned due in week 11 in tutorial. Additional details of the scope of the assignment and expectations will be provided to students at the start of the course.

Class Participation and Professionalism (20%)

A record of attendance will be kept for every week. If you have to miss a class, it is expected that you will give notice to the course director and tutorial leader as early as possible. Passive attendance will not be assessed positively. As leaders you will be required to be an effective contributor to group discussions and meetings. Class discussions serve as an excellent means to practice this important skill. While assessing your class participation, I will not merely judge you on how often you participate, but how your answers/questions lead to improved learning among your classmates. For class discussions, I will ask questions that require you to describe something (e.g. a finding from your readings, your experiences in the exercises), define concepts, argue for and against a hypothesis, or critically analyze the readings and relate them to your experiences. I will evaluate your contributions every class based on clearly defined expectations, which will be shared with students at the start of the course.

Learning to work together in teams is an important aspect of your education and preparation for your future careers. Some simulations require students to work in teams. When working as a team, students are reminded of the following expectations with respect to their behavior and contributions to the project:

Each team member is expected to:

- Treat other members with courtesy and respect;
- Establish a positive and productive team dynamic;
- Contribute substantially to the group simulation; and,
- Ensure familiarity with the entire contents of the simulation.

Individual Presentations #1 and #2 (10% each)

Each student will deliver a presentation on a topic approved by the instructor. Details will be provided by the instructor closer to the date.

Term Test (10%)

The term test is based on all the readings and role-play exercises/workshops/simulation that are part of the requirements of the class and require you to reflect and write about how you used the relevant research on a skill while you were planning, and executing your role in the role-play. It is important to attend all class sessions. More details about the format will be provided closer to the end of the term.

Re-Grading Policy and Procedure

If, after looking over the written comments of the marker, and the marks you have received, you feel that your work deserves re-consideration, you must observe the following procedures:

- Create a typed note containing the following: (i) Your name, (ii) Your Student Number, (iii) The criteria against which you believe you have been graded incorrectly, and (iv) An explanation of

why the marker has overlooked or misunderstood your assignment's merits. Ideally what this means is you create the perfect, textbook answer from your materials and then provide a comparison to your answer.

- Handwritten submissions will not be considered, it shows a lack of serious intent.
- Re-grading will be based only on what you submit in writing, not what you might tell your Professor in person.
- Staple your typed note to your graded assignment and give it to your Professor in class the following week.
- If you are unable to attend the following week's class for any reason, email your re-grading request to the Professor. Your Professor will re-grade the entire written material. Re-grading means that your answers will be re-evaluated and a new grade may be assigned. This means that it is possible to lose marks as well as to gain marks through re-grading.
- Please do not submit your materials for re-grading unless you are confident that a grading error has occurred. Re-graded materials should be available to you the following week, although occasionally a response may take two weeks.

Policy on Cheating and Misconduct

Students are responsible for understanding the nature and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism, cheating on an exam, submitting false assignments, impersonating another student?, or submitting for credit any work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course in the University or elsewhere. In writing scholarly papers, you must keep firmly in mind the need to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged borrowing of another writer's words and ideas. If you are in doubt about whether what you are doing is inappropriate, please consult your instructor. The instructor is happy to help, but transgressions will be pursued vigorously and students will be subject to academic penalties.

Week	Date	Lectures <i>Topics/Readings/Assignments/Due Dates</i>	Tutorial <i>Topics/Readings/Assignments/Due Dates</i>
1	Sept 14	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the objectives of the course • Review of timetable and expectations • Presentation by instructor <p>Workplace expectations <i>Required readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aamodt and Raynes, Chapter 1, 2 and 3 • Glenn, Chapter 1 • Public Policy Forum, Workplace 2.0: the changing nature of work, 2011 	<p>Introductions and logistics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of timetable and expectations • Review concepts presented in lecture
2	Sept 21	<p>Workplace professionalism and ethics – (including legislation and themes related to conflict of interest) <i>Required readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aamodt and Raynes, Chapter 4 • Kernaghan and Langford, Chapter 5 • Glenn, Chapter 2 	<p>Review of best practices Students will participate in exercises and discuss cases highlighting key lessons from lecture</p>
3	Sept 28	<p>Group dynamics, conflict resolution and team work <i>Required readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aamodt and Raynes, Chapter 5, 6 and 8 <p>Influence and negotiation – theories, strategies and tactics <i>Required readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aamodt and Raynes, Chapter 14 <p>Excel Primer for Presentations – video released on Moodle. To be reviewed prior to the October 19th workshop.</p>	<p>Group dynamics workshop Students will participate in several simulations. Case studies and reflective discussions will be used.</p>
4	Oct 5	Professional Writing I – Clear writing and key message	In-class writing workshop I – students will participate

		development <i>Required readings:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glenn, Chapters 3 and 4 • Aamodt and Raynes, Chapter 7 	in preparation of writing outlines, key message development and prepare an “elevator pitch.” Individual Writing Assignment #1 distributed (graded)
	Oct 12	Fall Reading Week – no class	
5	Oct 19	Professional Writing II – Correspondence and email standards (<i>This includes all legislation and regulations relevant to the public sector, including those relating to confidentiality, transparency and privacy protection, such as the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glenn, Chapters 3 and 4 • Kernaghan and Langford, Chapter 6 • Aamodt and Raynes, Chapter 7 Reminder to review prior to class: Excel Primer for Presentations video released on Moodle on September 28.	In-class writing workshop II – students will participate in preparation of writing emails and other formal correspondence. Leveraging Excel for Presentation Decks workshop – students will apply industry research techniques using Microsoft Excel to create a presentation slide for an executive-level audience. Individual Writing Assignment #2 will be distributed (graded)
6	Oct 26	Professional Writing III – Briefing notes <i>Required readings:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glenn, Chapter 7 • Peter Constantinou, On Briefing Ministers, Policy Options • Ontario Public Service, Writing Effective Briefing Materials (on-line) • Format and case materials provided by instructor 	In-class writing workshop III- students will participate in a briefing note workshop Individual Writing Assignment #3 will be completed in class (graded)
7	Nov. 2	Presentation Skills I – Presentation Basics <i>Required readings:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glenn, Chapter 1 • Dawn Angier, How to deliver highly effective presentations (on-line) p. 1-40 	Interview Workshop - students will participate in interview simulations and role play. Mid-term assessment via Zoom
8	Nov 9	Presentation Skills II – Advanced techniques and tactics <i>Required readings:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glenn, Chapter 1 • Dawn Angier, How to deliver highly effective presentations (on-line) p. 41-66 	Individual Student Presentation #1 <i>Students will participate in 5-minute job interviews (graded).</i> NOTE: Interviews will be recorded.
9	Nov 16	Career Planning I – Job Applications (Cover letters and resumes) for the Government and Broader Public Sector <i>Required readings:</i> Aamodt and Raynes, Chapter 15	Individual Student Presentation #1 continue <i>Students will participate in 5-minute job interviews (graded).</i> Writing Assignment #4 – distributed
10	Nov 23	Networking and soft skills in a 2.0 world <i>Required readings:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aamodt and Raynes, Chapter 9 and 14 • Glenn, Chapter 9 • Guest lecturer TBC BONUS: Best practices and appropriate use of Social media in the public sector will be provided via pre-recorded video for students to review at their leisure.	Individual Student Presentation #2 Students will have 5 minutes to present an engagement strategy for Jack.org to an interview panel.
11	Nov 30	Career Planning II - Job Interviews in the Government and Broader Public Sector <i>Required readings:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aamodt and Raynes, Chapter 15 	Individual Student Presentation #2 continue Students will have 5 minutes to present an engagement strategy for Jack.org to an interview panel.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ontario Public Service, Succeeding in the Interview Process (on-line) 	<p>Writing Assignment #4 (Cover letter and resume) assignment due today via Moodle</p> <p>Term test review questions will be provided by video for students to practice on their own time.</p>
12	Dec 7	Term Test – Take home	No tutorial