

York University
ADVERTISING & COMMUNICATIONS : 4240 A
Winter 2025

Course Instructor:
Prof. Pallavi Sodhi
psodhi@yorku.ca

Class meets: YK ACW 003
Thursdays: 19:00 – 21:50
TA: TBC

All components of the syllabus
(including weighting) are subject to change. Students will be kept updated of any changes that happen on eClass. However, unless otherwise notified, all lectures will be held on campus.

One extra live, online talk (attendance is voluntary) will be held at the end of the course for career guidance in the field of advertising and/or to participate in upcoming advertising focused programs and competitions. Date will be confirmed based on interest and avails of students interested to pursue a career in Advertising.

PREREQUISITES:

1) For students in an Honours program, 72 credits, including AP/ADMS 2200 3.00, or 2) other students, a grade of C+ or better in AP/ADMS 2200 3.00. Course credit exclusions: None.
PRIOR TO FALL 2009: Prerequisites: 1) For students in an Honours program, 72 credits, including AK/ADMS 2200 3.00 or 2) other students, a grade of C+ or better in AK/ADMS 2200 3.00. Course credit exclusion: AK/ADMS 4240 3.00.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

As the field of advertising and promotion continues to dramatically change, marketers must look beyond traditional media in order to achieve success. In order to best communicate with consumers, advertisers must utilize a myriad of tools (advertising, public relations, direct marketing, interactive/Internet marketing/social media advertising, sales promotion, and personal selling). This course covers the fundamentals of Advertising and Communication within the context of an integrated marketing communications perspective. With an equal emphasis on theory and practice, students will learn how and why Advertising and Communication is important to companies, large or small, and consumers, young or mature, in today's rapidly changing environment, which has affected both people's lifestyle and the world economy.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

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

- Learn the basics of Advertising and Integrated Communications and how to functionally apply them in an effective advertising and communications plan via a group team project. Through this group project, students will learn to apply strategic advertising planning which involves all stages of an advertising plan development, starting from writing a creative brief, through to creative strategy development, into creative concept and testing, finally through to the media planning/recommendation.
- Gain an appreciation of the importance of integrated marketing communications in today's consumer context.
- Develop an understanding of how the advertising industry has evolved in the face of the changing world of integrated communications.
- Understand the role of advertising agencies, the function of creative, media planning and

client servicing departments.

- Understand how integrated communications strategies are developed, and the various components of the integrated communication mix with special emphasis on the advertising component.
- Develop good creative and media briefs, which are key to developing effective creative and media strategy and plans.
- Understand how a media plan is developed: process of strategizing and implementing media strategies and tactics: measures for media campaign effectiveness, understanding and calculating CPT, Reach, Frequency, and GRPs of media campaigns.
- Understand different budgeting methods for IMC campaigns, ad effectiveness, ROI and ad testing/research methods. Exposure and processing and—measuring, recall and retention, non-response, surveys, panels, sales and tracking, Measures of behavior, Sources of measurement.
- View and analyze different kinds of advertising across different categories, some award winning industry creative and their market results.
- Simulate real life advertising scenarios from both the agency and client perspective. Get the opportunity to prepare and participate in Canada's largest marketing/advertising competition: The Canadian Marketing League 2025 (the erstwhile Canada's Next Top Ad Executive)

REQUIRED COURSE TEXT / READINGS:

Advertising & Promotion, 8th Canadian Edition Belch, Belch, Guolla*
ISBN 9781265003722978; Publisher: McGraw-Hill Ryerson

NOTES:

1. **The most recent price of the digital edition with a 180-day access is for C\$59. There may be changes to the price, determined by the publisher.*
2. *You are welcome to use the hardcopy of past editions (ideally not before the 6th edition), which may be available from alumni or as gently-used copies from book stores.*

Detailed PPTs and notes will be provided on eClass. As such, the textbook is best used as a complement to what is taught in class. Lecture notes will be supplemented by current ads, news articles, magazine and electronic readings, media numericals, web sources and case study material which will be posted as the course progresses. Students are expected to check the course website regularly.

WEIGHTING OF COURSE:

Group Project (Written Report, 25 pages max.) & Presentation of Marketing Communication Plan (15 minutes: Executive Summary)	40%
Creative Assignment (Individual)	10%
Class Participation: Labs (5%) & Quizzes (5%)	10%
Midterm Exam (in-class)	20%
Final Exam (online TBC)	20%
Total	100%

EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The development of an advertising plan forms the “thesis” and the key practical component of the course. The objective of this project is to integrate all advertising concepts learnt in theory, lectures and readings throughout the semester. It serves as a capstone project for the entire course. In the first week/class, groups of 4-6 members will be formed. For this project, each group will function as an advertising agency that is competing in the market to win an important

account/business in a designated product/service category. As one of the short listed agencies, your agency has been asked to prepare an advertising strategy and plan for a brand, and to present this before the marketing team in the client organization. The client has expressed a preference for a full-service agency that will function as a 'partner' in the business. As such, in addition to looking to hire the best 'creative and analytical minds' the client wants a fully integrated advertising strategy that can contribute on all strategic issues as well as ensure timely and efficient implementation of the plan.

The project involves a detailed report including:

- Description of the existing situation including company objectives, company strengths, and a detailed competitive analysis.
- Identify the customers for the specific product or service and describe the consumer behaviour in relevant ways (demographics, lifestyle, usage and attitude towards product, etc.). Explain why the product/service would be appropriate for your target market. This step could involve one-on-one interviewing and/or a focus group done among potential users of the product and/or follow-up survey of a larger sample.
- Outline a marketing strategy for the new product/service. This discussion should include a description of the product and its benefits, and positioning strategy. You would also develop a pricing strategy, as well as some indication of the distribution channel(s) that you would recommend.
- The promotional strategy and its implementation with a detailed analysis of the communication objectives, message strategy, creative brief, advertising concepts (and pre-testing), ad execution, budget and media plan. In addition, outlining other communication outlets for a holistic IMC plan.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COURSE:

This course will be experienced as a combination of lectures, group discussion, case analyses, electronic readings, creative thinking exercises and media analytics. Practical industry applications will be integrated throughout the course. This combination of theory and real-life applications and case studies is aimed to equip students with a comprehensive and practical know-how of advertising as a key component of integrated marketing communications. Group work will be an integral part of this course, and as such the course requires students to work effectively in teams of 4-6 students to manage the process of preparing group projects. The group exercises are designed to enable individuals within their team to develop their interpersonal, leadership, negotiation and organizational skills in addition to sharing and increasing their academic learning. Creative thinking is encouraged through creative problem solving exercises and creativity workshops. Media planning being another integral part of marketing communications, real-life media campaigns will be shown to demonstrate the analytics that goes behind the costing of a campaign. Numericals will form a key component of the media section of the course. Contemporary advertising campaigns will be analyzed in brainstorming sessions which will help generate creative advertising solutions to case studies. Students will be able to contribute and learn optimally in these sessions when they keep track of the latest developments in the ad world through both assigned and self-reading.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION / NOTES:

Performance Expectations, Workload & Time Commitment

This course sets high standards and requires a strong commitment to hard work from each student from the very start of the course. In order to maximize your learning in the course, it is expected that you will deliver your best effort in each class and the required assignments for the course. A fair amount of reading is expected in this class. Readings are to be done before class.

Time will also be needed to meet regularly with your groups, outside of class time, to do group project-related activities and other group assignments.

For this class to achieve the level of interaction and insight possible, and for student participation to be gauged, it is essential that students are present at each class. In the first class, groups will be assigned, details of the evaluation procedure will be discussed and structure of the subsequent classes will be shared. It is therefore very important to be regular in attendance starting from the very first class.

Team Grades

There will be grades assigned to teams as a whole. Successful teamwork is part of the curriculum. It is the onus of every individual in the group to ensure that his/her group functions effectively, efficiently and professionally. If one team member does not work well, it may be as much the team's issue as that of the individual. Approach teamwork respectfully and listen to one another.

At least once (possibly twice) during the semester you will have an opportunity to rate other team members in peer reviews and this may be used to adjust the individual's grade relative to the group, if indicated. Where a person has not lived up to the expectations of team members, I will evaluate the situation and may adjust the grade of fellow member(s) to reflect my assessment, at my sole discretion. The final mark assigned to you by the group is thus finalized by me, strictly confidential and will NOT be communicated to the individual student or group.

The peer evaluation process ensures a fair assessment of an individual's contribution to the group work. As a result of this, all team members may not receive the same grade for a team project.

Details on this will be provided as we progress through the semester.

A note on the Group project component

Group Project: Developing an Advertising Plan (25%) & Making a Presentation (15%)

The objective of this project is to integrate all advertising concepts learnt in theory, online lectures and readings throughout the semester. To avoid project overload at the end of the term, the submission of the project report worth 25% of the overall course weight, is broken down into 4 parts (weighted at 1.25%, 5%, 6.25% and 12.5%). These modular parts follow the topics that will be taught in class, so it is important to follow what is taught methodically. Each part will be evaluated and feedback will be provided to the group. The groups are expected to incorporate the feedback and continue forward into the next module. This will provide the group with the opportunity to better their grades in the final comprehensive report.

For this project, each group will function as an advertising agency that is competing in the market to win an important account/business in a designated product/service category. As one of the shortlisted agencies, your agency has been asked to prepare an advertising strategy and plan for a brand, and to present this before the marketing team in the client organization. The client has expressed a preference for a full-service agency that will function as a 'partner' in the business. As such, in addition to looking to hire the best 'creative and analytical minds' the client wants a fully integrated advertising strategy that can contribute on all strategic issues as well as ensure timely and efficient implementation of the plan.

More details on the project composition will be shared in the ensuing classes. A final written report (your final ad plan) must be submitted before making the final verbal presentation (worth 15% of the course weight).

Depending upon the number of groups, the presentations would be for about 15 minutes each and 10 minutes for Q&A. Remember you are making a presentation to the client on a day when other 'agencies' will also be presenting. Being precise, concise and articulate is key, but equally important is following the time allocation given to you.

A note on the Individual Assessment Components

Creative Assignment (10%)

The creative assignment is a fun and interesting challenge that aims to give students the opportunity to critique ads and demonstrate their skill in understanding a creative brief and create their own advertising solutions. A creative brief will be presented to the class, and each student will do a competitive ad critique as well as develop an ad using their choice of media vehicle. Students will get 4 weeks to work on their individual ad submission.

Mid-term Examination (20%) and Final Examination (20%)

The mid-term will be a closed book format held during lecture hours. The final exam will be of open book format and will be held on eClass. The exams will assess your understanding of the course material through questions based on the course material and would involve application of the material taught in class.

Class Participation (10%): Assignments/Labs (5%); Quizzes/Media Analytics (5%)

Students are encouraged to speak up in class and share the latest news/trends in the advertising world with the rest of the class. Sharing your thoughts, questions, ideas and issues is a good way to raise the level of knowledge of everyone. The format of this class is such that learning would be a function of the level of class participation. I would like you all to actively participate in the class, ask questions, and also cite your own experiences.

Every week, print, TV or outdoor ads will be discussed and critiqued in class. These ads will be shared only on the day of the class. Though a general format for critiquing/analyzing the ad will be provided, students are encouraged to facilitate discussion around the ad so as to bring fresh and new perspectives on the ads. Relevant questions, online forums and/or "binge-watching ads" will also be posted for discussion.

Advertising being both art and science, you will get the opportunity to participate in a variety of creative and analytical games and quizzes every week (sometimes online), the content of which will reflect what is taught and/or shared in class. Quizzes will cover the content posted/recorded or taught in that class. ***You will get 1 mark in each quiz just by participating and completing the quiz. Rest of the marks will be graded on how well you do your quiz.*** In other words, you will get both "earned" and "awarded" marks!

Adequate preparation for the class, regular attendance and full involvement in the class is expected. Please come on time and use (the old fashioned!!) name cards to identify yourself for all class sessions. Class participation grade will be based on my perception of your performance on the above requirements. The evaluation would be subjective hence you will have to live with my judgment on this. You will get good grades if you contribute to the overall learning of the class. If the participation becomes counterproductive (or you just speak because you want to get noticed with nothing to add to the discussion) you will get negative grades.

Bonus Assignments/SOPs: Periodically, bonus assignments will be given in class and posted online. This is your opportunity to make up for lapses in class participation. Grading of these bonus assignments will be done based on quality, not quantity. Short high-quality contributions (e.g., including excellent ad examples) will carry .5 participation points. Extensive, well-thought out/researched and high-quality contributions will carry 1 participation point. Other contributions may carry a fraction of .5 and 1 point, respectively.

Course Norms

1. Attendance in lectures (on campus or in the offchance there is an online lecture substitute) is required. Absence from class will affect your class participation grade. If lectures are pre-recorded, advance notice will be given. In these situations, there will be graded opportunities to participate in online forums, quizzes or SOPs.
2. There are no make-ups for any missed or late work. Personal emergencies will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
3. Active participation is expected in class discussions and/or assignments, be it in-class or online. The real world demands active participation...so does this course, which attempts to simulate the real world environment.
4. Group study in preparation for live classes is encouraged. However once a discussion starts, each student is responsible for his/her own performance. Class participation is judged individually. Instructions will be given as to whether a particular assignment or exercise is an individual activity or a group activity.
5. It will be your responsibility to keep up with the assignments, any announcements, or changes in the syllabus.
6. This course demands being up-to-date. You will succeed only if you keep up with the rapidly changing dynamics of the ad world. Students are expected to track, via published articles and/or surfing on the web, the latest news about technology that impacts marketing. You are welcome to present such news items read from the media, but the news item should allow for a meaningful discussion in class. This will be considered an individual activity and there will be a time limit to such individual presentations. A write-up or a copy of the article may occasionally be required on these news items.

In summary, observe the 4 P's of course norms, and you are already on the path to success: *Presence, Punctuality, Preparation and Participation*.

Lecture Outline:

The following is a general tentative outline of the course content. The actual dates and sequence of topics covered in specific sessions may vary somewhat depending on progress of class. Moreover, due to the ongoing COVID situation, some content, structure and delivery format may be modified.

Unless otherwise announced, all lectures will be held on campus.

ADVERTISING AND COMMUNICATION 4240A
Course Instructor: Professor Pallavi Sodhi
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Detailed Course Outline – Tentative Schedule

DATE/WEEK	TOPIC(S)	TEXT, RESOURCES, ASSIGNMENTS
Week 1 Sep 4	MODULE: Introduction to Course and IMC An Overview of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)	Course Structure and grading overview An IMC Real-life Case study Chapter 1 of Text A Glimpse of Top Award winning Ads An IMC Real-life Case study
Week 2 Sep 11	MODULE: Understanding Consumers and Role of Agencies Organizing for IMC Consumer Behaviour in IMC	Chapters 2, 3 Formation of groups & Briefing of Group Project
GROUP AGENCY CONTRACT & PROPOSAL/GROUP PROJECT PART 1 DUE BY 11:59pm ON SEP 17, 2025		
Week 3 Sep 18	MODULE: Response & Feedback Communication Response Model Objectives for the IMC Plan	Chapters 4 & 5 Chapter 18 (Self-read) Individual Creative Assignment Briefing
Week 4 Sep 25	MODULE: Positioning & Creative Planning Brand Positioning Decisions Preview to Creative Strategy	Chapter 6 Reading: InterBrand Top 100 Brands Chapter 7
GROUP PROJECT PART 2, DUE BY 11:59pm ON OCT 1, 2025		
Week 5 Oct 2	MODULE: Creative Development Creative Strategy Decisions	CREATIVE LAB Chapter 7 + Presentation on "Emotional versus Functional Advertising: Top Ad Campaigns"
Week 6 Oct 9	MODULE: Creative Execution Creative Tactics	Chapter 8 Creative Critiquing Exercises Briefing on mid-term
Individual Creative Assignment Due by 23:59 October 15, 2025 READING WEEK. No class on October 16, 2025		
Week 7: MIDTERM TEST OCTOBER 23, on-campus, during lecture hours.		

Week 8 Oct 30	MODULE: Critique & Test Measuring Effectiveness of the Promotional Program	Chapter 9: Different advertising research techniques Developing an ad testing questionnaire for the ad you developed in your Individual Creative Assignment
GROUP PROJECT PART 3, DUE BY 11:59pm, ON NOVEMBER 5, 2025		
Week 9 Nov 6	MODULE: Media Planning I Media Strategy, Tactics & Media Budget planning	Chapter 10: Developing a media plan, Media Analytics. Samples of media plans of different campaigns Numericals/ Media Math
Week 10 Nov 13	MODULE: Media Planning II Media channels: print, broadcast and outdoor	MEDIA LAB/QUIZ Chapters 11, 12, 13 Numericals/Media Math Group Project Media Planning
Week 11 Nov 20	MODULE: IMC CHANNELS I Sales promotion PR Role in IMC MODULE: IMC CHANNELS II Direct Marketing Internet and Interactive Media	Chapters 14,15 PR Success Stories, Sampling Creativity, Sales Promotion, Types and Budgeting Chapters 16,17 Direct Mail Budgeting Campaign Effectiveness/ROI
FINAL GROUP REPORT DUE BY 11:59pm ON November 26, 2025		
Week 12 Nov 27	GROUP PRESENTATION All groups need to be present. Both presenting and attending groups will be evaluated.	
Career Options in Advertising. Attendance is voluntary. Date TBC based on interest.		
FINAL EXAM 3 HOURS during Final Exam Period December 4-19, 2025		

Please respect the privacy of those involved in the class and the copyrights of your instructor(s). Lectures, case studies as well as exams are copyrighted and all recordings, including recordings of Zoom live classes, are confidential. They are not to be passed on to anyone not enrolled in the course, posted anywhere else, or used for purposes other than studying for this course. Failure to comply with these restrictions may be prosecuted to the full extent of the law and regulations of York University.

Additional Notes:

RELEVANT UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS & COURSE POLICIES

Academic honesty and integrity

In this course, we strive to maintain academic integrity to the highest extent possible. Please familiarize yourself with the meaning of academic integrity by completing the [new Academic Conduct Policy](#) at the beginning of the course. Breaches of academic integrity range from cheating to plagiarism (i.e., the improper crediting of another's work, the representation of another's ideas as your own, etc.).

All instances of academic dishonesty in this course will be reported to the appropriate university authorities, and can be punishable according to the the new policy as outlined in the

URL: <https://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/policies/academic-conduct-policy-and-procedures/>

The Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies considers breaches of the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty to be serious matters. The Senate Policy on Academic Honesty is an affirmation and clarification for members of the University of the general obligation to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. As a clear sense of academic honesty and responsibility is fundamental to good scholarship, the policy recognizes the general responsibility of all faculty members to foster acceptable standards of academic conduct and of the student to be mindful of and abide by such standards. Suspected breaches of academic honesty will be investigated and charges shall be laid if reasonable and probable grounds exist.

Email Etiquette

Please use your yorku.ca email address, and list the course code and section in the subject line (e.g., ADMS4240 A). I will do my best to respond to your emails within one business day.

Late work

Late work will not be accepted, unless the student has provided me with a valid excuse *prior to the due date*, and I have offered an extension.

Schedule Changes

If there are any changes in the class schedule, I will try to give you as much notice as possible. Please regularly check eClass/course websites for any class announcements.

Reappraisals

Students may, with sufficient academic grounds, request that a final grade in a course be reappraised (which may mean the review of specific pieces of tangible work). Non-academic grounds are not relevant for grade reappraisals; in such cases, students are advised to petition to their home Faculty. Students are normally expected to first contact the course director to discuss the grade received and to request that their tangible work be reviewed. Tangible work may include written, graphic, digitized, modeled, video recording or audio recording formats, but not oral work. Students need to be aware that a request for a grade reappraisal may result in the original grade being raised, lowered or confirmed.

For reappraisal procedures and information, please visit the Office of the Registrar site at:

<https://myacademicrecord.students.yorku.ca/grade-reappraisal-policy>

Religious Accommodation

York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community, and making accommodations for observances of special significance to adherents. For more information on religious accommodation, please visit

<https://w2prod.sis.yorku.ca/Apps/WebObjects/cdm.woa/wa/regobs>

Course Withdrawal

You may [withdraw from a course](#) using the registration and enrolment system after the drop deadline until the last day of class for the term associated with this course (i.e. November 27, 2025). When you withdraw from a course, the course remains on your transcript without a grade and is notated as "W". The withdrawal will not affect your grade point average or count towards the credits required for your degree.

Last date to drop a course without receiving a grade is November 4, 2025 (also see Financial Deadlines)

If you withdraw between November 5 and the end of classes in this course (November 27), the course remains on your transcript without a grade and is notated as "W".

Ref: <https://registrar.yorku.ca/enrol/dates/2025-2026/fall-winter>

Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

The nature and extent of accommodations shall be consistent with and supportive of the integrity of the curriculum and of the academic standards of programs or courses. Provided that students have given sufficient notice about their accommodation needs, instructors shall take reasonable steps to accommodate these needs in a manner consistent with the guidelines established hereunder. For more information please visit the Disabilities Services website at <http://calendars.registrar.yorku.ca/2015-2016/services/student/counselling/index.htm>

York's disabilities offices and the Registrar's Office work in partnership to support alternate exam and test accommodation services for students with disabilities at the Keele campus. For more information on alternate exams and tests please visit <http://www.yorku.ca/altexams/>

Please alert the Course Director as soon as possible should you require special accommodation.

Deferred Exams: Deferred standing may be granted to students who are unable to write their final examination at the scheduled time or to submit their outstanding course work on the last day of classes. Details can be found at <https://myacademicrecord.students.yorku.ca/deferred-standing>

Followed by handing in a completed DSA form and supporting documentation directly to the main office of the School of Administrative Studies (282 Atkinson) and add your ticket number to the DSA form. The DSA and supporting documentation must be submitted no later than five (5) business days from the date of the exam. These requests will be considered on their merit and decisions will be made available by logging into the above mentioned link. No individualized communication will be sent by the School to the students (no letter or e-mails).

Students with approved DSA will be able to write their deferred examination during the School's deferred examination period. No further extensions of deferred exams shall be granted. The format and covered content of the deferred examination may be different from that of the originally scheduled examination. The deferred exam may be closed book, cumulative and comprehensive and may include all subjects/topics of the textbook whether they have been covered in class or not.