

York University
ADVERTISING & COMMUNICATIONS : 4240 A
Fall 2026

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

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

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:

Students must meet one of the following prerequisites:

1. For students enrolled in an Honours program: completion of **72 credits**, including **AP/ADMS 2200 3.00**; or
2. For all other students: a grade of **C+ or higher in AP/ADMS 2200 3.00**.

Prerequisites will be checked by the department within the first two weeks of the course. Students are personally responsible for ensuring that they have completed the required prerequisites. Failure to meet the prerequisites may result in administrative withdrawal from the course. The department will not be responsible for any tuition or fee refunds resulting from such withdrawals.

If you completed ADMS 2200 at an institution other than York University, please email a copy of your Statement of Transfer Credit issued by the Admissions Office to psodhi@yorku.ca no later than the second class.

If your transfer credit application is still pending, please submit:

- A copy of your transfer credit application;
- The course outline for the course you believe is equivalent to ADMS 2200; and
- An official transcript from the other institution showing successful completion of the course (for non-BAS/Honours students, with a grade of **C+ or higher**).

If you are an **exchange student**, please provide a transcript from your home institution showing completion of courses equivalent to the prerequisites listed above.

If you are an **IEP student**, additional documentation (such as a CV/résumé) may be required to assess whether you have sufficient background to meet the prerequisites for this course.

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 perspectives Get the opportunity to prepare and participate in Canada's largest marketing competition: The Canadian Marketing League 2027 (x-Canada's Next Top Ad Exec Competition)

REQUIRED COURSE TEXT / READINGS:

Advertising & Promotion, 2026 Release Canadian Edition Belch, Belch, Guolla*

ISBN 978-1-26-692139-1; Publisher: McGraw-Hill Ryerson

1. **The most recent price of the digital edition with a 180-day access is for C\$78. 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 7th 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 studies. 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	20%
Final Exam	20%
Total	100%

ORGANIZATION OF THE COURSE:

- This course combines lectures, discussions, case analyses, readings, creative development exercises, and media analytics, with a strong emphasis on practical industry applications. Students will apply advertising and integrated marketing communications concepts through contemporary case studies, real-world campaigns, and team-based projects.
- *Group work is a key component of the course. Students will work in teams of 4-6 to develop project management, communication, leadership, negotiation, and collaboration skills.
- Creative development forms an integral part of the course, with students learning how to generate, evaluate, and refine advertising ideas, develop creative strategies, and translate consumer insights into effective advertising executions. Creative thinking and strategic decision-making will be fostered through labs, brainstorming sessions, and case-based learning.
- The media planning component includes analysis of real-world campaigns, media metrics, budgeting, and quantitative exercises. Students are encouraged to stay informed about current developments in the advertising industry through assigned and independent reading.

***THE CAPSTONE PROJECT:**

ADVERTISING PLAN (40%)

The Advertising Plan is the capstone project for this course and serves as the primary application of concepts covered in lectures, readings, discussions, and course activities. By Week 2, students will be assigned to groups of 4-6 members. Each group will function as a full-service advertising agency competing for a client account in a designated product or service category.

Working as a shortlisted agency, teams will develop and present an integrated advertising plan for a brand. The project requires the application of strategic, analytical, creative, and media planning concepts to address the client's business and marketing objectives.

The final plan will include:

- Situation and competitive analysis
- Target audience and consumer insights
- Marketing strategy, including positioning and marketing mix considerations

- Integrated marketing communications strategy, including communication objectives, creative strategy, creative development, ad executions across different IMC channels, budget, media plan, and supporting promotional activities

The project is designed to be completed in stages throughout the semester, with interim submissions aligned to course topics. Feedback provided at each stage is expected to be incorporated into the final report.

Evaluation

- Advertising Plan Report: **25%** (Submitted in four modules throughout the term)
- Final Client Presentation: **15%**

Each group will deliver a professional client presentation (approximately 15 minutes, followed by a Q&A period). Teams will be evaluated on the quality of their strategy, creativity, analysis, recommendations, presentation effectiveness, and ability to respond to client questions.

A detailed Group Project Work Guide, including project requirements, milestones, evaluation criteria, submission guidelines, and timelines, will be posted and discussed in Week 2 of the course.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION / NOTES:

Performance Expectations, Workload, and Attendance

This course is designed to be rigorous and requires consistent effort throughout the semester. Students are expected to complete assigned readings before class, participate actively in discussions and course activities, and contribute fully to group assignments and projects. Regular meetings outside class will be necessary to complete team-based work.

Because much of the learning occurs through discussion, case analysis, and collaborative activities, regular attendance is essential. Important course information, group assignments, and evaluation details will be discussed beginning in the first class, and students are expected to attend all scheduled sessions.

Teamwork and Peer Evaluation

Several course components are team-based, and successful teamwork is an important learning objective of the course. Students are expected to contribute professionally, respectfully, and consistently to their teams.

One or more peer evaluations may be conducted during the semester. Peer assessment feedback may be used to adjust an individual's grade relative to the group grade where warranted. Final decisions regarding any grade adjustments are at the instructor's discretion. As a result, members of the same group may receive different grades based on their individual contributions. Additional details will be provided during the semester.

Assessment Components

Individual Creative Assignment (10%)

Students will apply creative strategy and development concepts by critiquing competitive ads in

an assigned category, developing a creative brief and then developing an original advertisement based off of the creative brief.

Midterm Examination (20%) and Final Examination (20%)

Both examinations will be closed-book and will assess students' understanding and application of course concepts covered in lectures, readings, cases, discussions, and class activities.

Class Participation (10%)

- Individual Assignments & Group Labs: **5%**
- Quizzes/Media Analytics: **5%**

Students are expected to arrive on time and use name cards during class. Participation grades will be based on the quality of contributions, preparedness, attendance, and engagement. Sharing relevant, current ads, engaging in ad critiques are welcome! Constructive contributions that enhance class learning will be rewarded, while disruptive or unproductive participation may negatively affect the participation grade.

Weekly quizzes will be based on course content and assigned materials. Students will receive 1 mark for participating in and completing each quiz, regardless of performance. The remaining marks will be based on the quality of their responses and overall quiz performance. Thus, quiz grades will include both participation ("awarded") and performance-based ("earned") marks.

Bonus Participation Opportunities/SOPs

Occasional bonus assignments or Special Opportunity Points (SOPs) may be offered during the semester. These activities provide students with additional opportunities to demonstrate engagement and earn participation credit. Bonus marks will be awarded based on the quality, insight, and relevance of the contribution rather than its length or quantity.

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.

Regular attendance, preparation, punctuality, and active involvement are expected throughout the course.

COURSE NORMS

To support a productive learning environment, students are expected to:

1. Attend class regularly and arrive on time.
2. Participate actively and professionally in discussions, activities, and assignments.
3. Keep up with assigned readings, course announcements, and any updates posted during the semester.
4. Stay informed about current developments in advertising, marketing, media, and technology, and be prepared to contribute relevant examples to class discussions.
5. Meet all assignment deadlines. Late or missed work will not normally be accommodated except in documented exceptional circumstances, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

In summary, observe the four P's of success in this course: Presence, Punctuality, Preparation, and Participation.

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

ADVERTISING AND COMMUNICATION 4240A Course Instructor: Professor Pallavi Sodhi psodhi@yorku.ca Detailed Course Outline – Tentative Schedule		
DATE/WEEK	TOPIC(S)	TEXT, RESOURCES, ASSIGNMENTS
Week 1 Sep 10	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 17	MODULE: Understanding Consumers and Role of Agencies Organizing for IMC Consumer Behaviour in IMC	Chapters 2, 3 <i>Formation of groups & Briefing of Group Project</i>
GROUP AGENCY CONTRACT & PROPOSAL/GROUP PROJECT PART 1 DUE BY 11:59pm ON SEP 23, 2026		
Week 3 Sep 24	MODULE: Response & Feedback Communication Response Model Objectives for the IMC Plan	Chapters 4 & 5 Chapter 18 (Self-read) <i>Individual Creative Assignment Briefing</i>
Week 4 October 1	MODULE: Positioning & Creative Planning Brand Positioning Decisions Problem. Insights. Big Idea	Chapter 6 Reading: InterBrand Top 100 Brands Prelude to Creative Development Top Creative Ad Campaigns
GROUP PROJECT PART 2, DUE BY 11:59pm ON OCT 7, 2026		
Week 5 Oct 8	MODULE: Creative Development MODULE: Creative Execution Creative Tactics	Chapter 7 with Chapter 8 Creative Critiquing Exercises asynchronous CREATIVE LAB Briefing on mid-term
Individual Creative Assignment Due by 23:59 October 14, 2026 READING WEEK. No class in Week 6 on October 15, 2026		
Week 7 Oct 22	Week 7: MIDTERM TEST OCTOBER 22, on-campus, during lecture hours.	
Week 8 Oct 29	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 4, 2026		
Week 9 Nov 5	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 12	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 19	MODULE: IMC CHANNELS I Sales promotion PR Role in IMC	Chapters 14,15 PR Success Stories, Sampling Creativity, Sales Promotion, Types and Budgeting
Week 12 Nov 26	MODULE: IMC CHANNELS II Direct Marketing Internet and Interactive Media	Chapters 16,17 Direct Mail Budgeting Campaign Effectiveness/ROI Recap of Group Project Expectations
FINAL GROUP REPORT & PPT DUE BY 11:59pm ON Dec 2, 2026		
Week 13 Dec 3	GROUP PRESENTATION All groups need to be present. Both presenting and attending groups will be evaluated.	
	FINAL EXAM 3 HOURS during Final Exam Period December 10-23, 2026	

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 11 and the end of classes in this course (December 3), the course remains on your transcript without a grade and is notated as "W".

Ref: <https://registrar.yorku.ca/enrol/dates/2026-2027/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 <https://students.yorku.ca/accessibility>

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.