SOIL 550 – Professional Communication Strategies

# BACKGROUND

The ability to work in a team and strong communication skills are qualities that are consistently in demand by employers. It is particularly important to effectively communicate and collaborate on issues related to land and water, as they are inherently complex and involve multiple jurisdictions and stakeholders. We also live in a time where we have access to many tools that can enhance our communications by making them more engaging through online platforms and multimedia. These tools can help to connect the science of land and water systems to non-scientists such as planners and policy makers.

# Course Format

**Winter Term 2**

**When:** **Tuesday, Thursday 11:00 – 12:30 pm**

**Room:** **MCML 358**

Each learning session will consist of a lecture, class discussion/activity, small group work period or tutorial. See the schedule below for more details.

Guest speakers will be incorporated to complement depth and appropriate breadth of subject matter and current developments in communication strategies. In addition, professional representatives will be brought in as resource people to keep communication strategies current with professional practice. Most tutorials will consist of hands-on sessions to facilitate learning about online and multimedia tools, thus you will need a computer.

**Instructor:** Julie Wilson

**Office:** MCML 112A

**Contact:**

[julie.wilson@ubc.ca](mailto:julie.wilson@ubc.ca)

604-822-6360

# Learning Outcomes

#### By the end of this course, learners should be able to:

Gain the skills required through the application of **critical thinking and assessment** to **prepare and deliver professional communications** of academically complex information **in a** **collaborative team environment effectively and credibly**, by **employing information technologies** congruent with stakeholder needs.

More specifically:

1. Describe different communication formats/delivery used by professionals.
2. Be innovative and creative in their professional communications assessment and delivery. Note the balance needed between content and style.
3. Evaluate professional communications by exploring and applying critical thinking and analysis to assessment of communications and information.
4. Develop and deliver professional communications in a credible and academically rigorous manner.
5. Assess and evaluate the needs of the end-user or audience.
6. Develop competence in the (professional) use of information technologies (e.g., social media, website design, emerging technologies).
7. Discuss ethical considerations of professionals and their communications.
8. Work effectively in a collaborative team environment.

# Student Responsibilities

Collaboration is a key feature of the SOIL 550 course. This means that group work will constitute a major part of the course. Students must come prepared to class, take ownership of their roles and responsibilities in group work, in order to positively contribute to others’ learning. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed and make it up on your own time.

When it comes time for the team project, your team will develop a charter – in it you will define each of your roles, and consequences for team members who do not commit to their responsibilities. Communication is a key part of collaboration, thus laying out your team’s expectations at the outset can make the team work process more streamlined. It helps to avoid duplication of work and frustrations. Your team project will be self and peer reviewed, where you will have an opportunity to present your views on your own and others’ strengths and contributions.

# EVALUATION

* In-class Participation (15%)
* Critical Review Assignment (10%)
* Five part Argument (20%)
* Tutorials (10%)
* Final Team Project (45%)
  + Communication Action Plan and Self/Team Evaluation (35%)
  + Team Oral Presentation (10%)

# ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or final project and more serious consequences may apply if the matter is referred to the President’s Advisory Committee on Student Discipline. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences.