UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
MA COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

STUDENT HANDBOOK and CAPSTONE PROJECT GUIDELINES

2021

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MEET THE MACT TEAM

Welcome to the MACT program!

Eileen Crookes has worked with the MACT program since 2004 as Program Coordinator. She is your resource for program and course issues as well as University and Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research policies. Eileen is the financial and administrative manager of the program as well as having responsibility for marketing and recruitment.

Contact Eileen at ecrookes@ualberta.ca

Office hours are 8:00 am – 4:00 pm (mountain time), Monday to Friday.

Staff and faculty are working remotely through August 2021 due to public health restrictions related to COVID-19.

CORE FACULTY and ACADEMIC ADVISORS

When you accepted your position in the MACT program, you were assigned an academic advisor to assist you throughout your program. Any questions you may have of an academic nature can be addressed to your academic advisor.

Gordon Gow, PhD
Professor and Director, Communications and Technology
gordon.gow@ualberta.ca

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To read about our contract and adjunct instructors, please go to the MACT website

SPRING INSTITUTE

At your **first spring institute**, you will meet your professors, your cohort, students from the previous cohort, and the MACT staff. You will also be introduced to the online course management system (eClass) and will be given various University of Alberta orientations. You will begin work on the first two core courses of the program, COMM 502 – Human Communications and COMM 503 – Social Impact of Digital Media. You will complete the in-class requirements for these courses during the Spring Institute. Several social occasions such as the welcoming reception and the farewell dinner are long standing traditions at the Institute will also be scheduled.

At your **second Spring Institute**, you can expect much the same time pressures as the first. You will complete COMM 501—Applied Research Methods and COMM 506—Strategic Communications in a Digital World. An added component of your second Spring Institute is your participation in the poster session at the annual Communications and Technology Research Symposium. This event is open to the university community. All second year MACT students participate in the poster session. First year students attend, but are not required to prepare a poster presentation until their second Spring Institute.

RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA SYMPOSIUM ON COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

Final Friday of the Spring Institute (1:00 – 4:30 pm)

This annual symposium serves as a forum for professionals, academics, and MACT students and alumni to come together to discuss communication and technology.

Our second year MACT students present their research proposals in poster format at the symposium. A distinguished lecturer is invited each year who presents a perspective on this diverse field. The symposium is an excellent opportunity to network with individuals working and studying in communications, and will enrich your graduate learning experience.

THE COHORT MODEL

The MACT program uses the cohort model of student progress. A cohort historically referred to a band of soldiers in ancient Rome. We use the term simply to refer to a group that has been established for the purpose of seeking a common goal or following the same path. The goal or path is your program of graduate studies at the University of Alberta. You are a member of the cohort that came together at

your first Spring Institute. Only one cohort is admitted each year, so you may hear occasional references to "Cohort 2020," "Cohort 2021," and so on.

What the cohort model means for you is that much of your graduate student experience will be shared with other students. Many friendships and professional relationships are established in each cohort. These connections can be an unanticipated benefit of the cohort model. The reason we are committed to this model, though, is that it allows you to meet and work with a relatively small group of people in the online and classroom courses to follow. Mutual support is possible within your cohort, and you're encouraged to take full advantage of that possibility.

For example, we expect that the transition to the first online course will be smoother because you have already met your colleagues face-to-face. Similarly, we hope that you'll look forward to your second Spring Institute in part because of the opportunity to renew connections with members of your cohort, many of whom you will have had only online contact during the intervening months. Fellow members of your cohort can support you in your goal of completing the program. In turn, they may benefit by your encouragement and advice throughout the two years you are with us.

The decision to leave the cohort for any reason, even if only for a course or two, is therefore one you should consider carefully. If at all possible – and we know that students' lives are active and sometimes even hectic or disrupted – you should try to remain with your cohort for the full progression of the core courses. Each core course is offered only once per year. Skipping a core course, even if you intend to take it later, will lengthen the timeline to completing your degree. Perhaps more importantly, it can cause you to miss some of the benefits of the cohort model.

For example, if you missed the first online course in your program for some reason, which is offered in the fall of your first year, you would have to take the course the following year. This would disturb the intended sequence of the curriculum, which builds progressively on concepts covered in earlier courses. You would also be taking the course with members of a different cohort. As a result, you would have to try to get to know people using only electronic postings, and without the benefit of the connections you have built during Spring Institute. A further consequence of leaving the cohort temporarily in this case is that you would miss benefits and mutual support that occurred in your cohort as people deal for the first time with studying in an online course in the program.

You are required to discuss your intent to miss a core course with your academic advisor or the MACT director. Provide your proposed plan of study, which should describe your timeline for completion of core courses, electives and the final research project at this meeting. Your plan indicates that you understand what is required to keep you on track to successful completion of the program.

ONLINE LEARNING

The term "online learning" refers to a type of distance education that is delivered using the Internet and specific course management software known at the University of Alberta as "eClass". Students access the eClass website where all course information, for the courses that you are registered in, is located. There is also a place for conferencing, where students enter into dialogue with their classmates and instructors.

The type of online learning that the MACT program utilizes most fully is called asynchronous. Students learning asynchronously can access the course and do the work required for it whenever it is convenient for them – for example, in the early morning, during their lunch hour, or in the evening. The entire course is archived and all messages remain available for reading and response. Synchronous technology, on the other hand, requires all learners to be online at a certain time. Chat sessions may be set up in different courses at specified times, but these are optional, and are not graded.

Online courses in the MACT program have start and end dates in the same way as other University of Alberta courses which run on the semester system (i.e. from early September to early December). Within this time frame, due dates are set for completing sections and submitting assignments. The entire group of students (your cohort) proceeds through the course on the same schedule, meeting the same deadlines. Fall and winter term courses run over 13 weeks, summer courses are 6 weeks in length and Spring Institute courses run over 3 weeks in May. Except in May 2020 and 2021 when Spring Institute courses were offered over 6 weeks online due to the pandemic and COVID-19 restrictions.

The flexibility of distance learning allows you to choose when and where to learn – at home, in the workplace, or even in a hotel room while you travel for work or pleasure.

Are there rules to follow when making postings?

To make this learning activity as meaningful as possible, these are guidelines you should follow:

> 1. Follow your instructor's guidelines for your postings. Make your postings as brief as possible. Ensure that you post your work to the assigned conference forum.

> 2. Use appropriate language – treat this activity the same way as you would

in a face to face class discussion by showing respect for others.

3. Follow the schedule for posting. It is designed to give all members of the conference time to read and think about the postings, and make thoughtful responses. Post your responses in the assigned conference forum.

4. Take time to make a useful contribution to the conference. Check your grammar and spelling.

5. Treat others as you would like to be treated – use only constructive criticism and give praise where it is due. Remember that if you have urgent questions or concerns about the course or the program's administration, you should contact the instructor or program office rather than using the eClass Discussions Tool.

6. Contribute your expertise by answering the questions of others. Share your relevant experiences about the topic with other students. Suggest other sources of information, if you have them.

7. Be forgiving of yourself as well as others. Since this type of learning is new to many people, mistakes will occur.

Students are reminded that all postings related to online discussions for courses cannot be circulated, in any form, outside the context of the course for which they are made.

While the strength of online discussions comes from students sharing general and specific information from their professional experiences, students are advised to structure their comments to reflect a descriptive and academic analysis of the situation, and refrain from including personal comments about individuals or groups involved in the situation.

Students are also reminded to consider the current level of public knowledge about a particular situation when including information in an online posting.

Students should be aware that some of their activities on the course sites (i.e. number of visits, time of visit, number of pages, discussions read etc) can be monitored and tracked by the instructors.

CLEARING CONDITIONS OF ADMISSION

Your offer of admission letter outlines the conditions of your admission and the deadline to clear those conditions. Typically for students admitted to spring term, like MACT students, this deadline is 30 June of the admission year. Please review your offer letter carefully and follow the instructions provided to clear your conditions promptly. Registration to future terms can be blocked by FGSR if conditions are not cleared by the deadline.

REGISTRATION

Core courses

You will be able to register yourself into MACT core and elective via Bear Tracks.

Course-based route

Year One	Year Two
Spring ● COMM 502 Human Communications ● COMM 503 Social Impact of Digital Media	Spring ● COMM 501 Research Methods ● COMM 506 Strategic Communications
Summer	Summer
Fall ● COMM 504 Organizational Communication	Fall ● COMM 509 Advanced Seminar in Research Design
Winter ● COMM 505 Contemporary Issues in Communication and Technology	Winter ● COMM 900 (if all electives and core courses are complete)

Plus 9 credits (three 3credit courses) of elective coursework

Students in the **thesis route** will complete the following core courses COMM 501, 502, 503, 504, 505. In addition, three electives and a research thesis are required. Thesis students should consult with their academic advisor about their schedule to ensure that they are maintaining full time status throughout their program.

Your timetable and fee assessment is available on Bear Tracks. The university does not mail out hardcopies of these documents and students are responsible for accessing this information themselves on Bear Tracks. For information on fees, please visit the Office of the Registrar's website. Tuition and fee amounts are made available as soon as they are determined. Check the Academic Schedule in the University of Alberta calendar for payment deadlines. Information about payment options is available on the Financial Services website.

Students are responsible for paying fees/fines by stated deadlines. Non-payment will result in access to grades, registration and convocation being withheld by the Office of the Registrar.

Electives

We offer online electives during the summer, fall and winter terms each year. An information session is scheduled during the spring institute with details about summer courses as well as electives to be offered in the fall and winter terms. You will have exclusive access to register for MACT elective courses up to approximately 6 weeks before the start of a course. Online registration will open to all University of Alberta graduate students at that time.

Capstone Research Project

When you and your supervisor have determined that you are ready to register in the capping research project course (COMM 900), contact the MACT office to request registration. You **will not** be registered automatically into this course or have access to register yourself.

Thesis students will register into the thesis course (THES) rather than COMM 900.

CAMPUS COMPUTING ID and BEAR TRACKS

Your campus computing logon (called a CCID) and password are extremely important to your life as a University of Alberta graduate student. When you receive those data (emailed to you after you submit your online application for admission), please make note of them. You will need this information for signing on to your online courses, to access library, Bear Tracks and administrative resources. The MACT office does not know your password and we cannot help you if you lose them. If you do lose/forget your password, you will have to contact IST to have you password reset.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

The University has an Electronic Communications Policy for students and applicants.

All students and applicants are assigned a University of Alberta Campus Computing ID (CCID) with e-mail privileges. The 'CCID@ualberta.ca' e-mail address originally assigned by the University is the e-mail address to which communications will be sent.

Failure to receive or read University communications sent to the University e-mail address in a timely manner does not absolve students and applicants from knowing, responding to or complying with the content of that communication.

Check your U of A email account regularly. Emails addressed to you individually by the University **will not** appear in your eClass course sites.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENT

The University of Alberta has a Professional Development (PD) Requirement for all graduate students admitted in fall term 2016 and beyond. You will develop an individualized career plan (Individual Development Plan or IDP) and complete eight hours of professional development activities, inspired by your career plan.

Requirements and Timeline:

- For MACT students, the Individual Development Plan (IDP) completed and submitted in first 12 months of study (at your second Spring Institute)

- Eight hours of approved professional development activities completed prior to the completion of the capstone research project (COMM 900)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND ETHICS REQUIREMENT

Academic Integrity and Ethics Training is mandatory for all newly-admitted UAlberta graduate students who started their degree program on or after September 1, 2004. Each student is normally expected to complete the equivalent of at least eight (8) hours of structured academic activity to meet this requirement. More information is available on the FGSR website

CAPSTONE PROJECT SUPERVISORS

During COMM 509 you will seek out a capstone project supervisor with guidance from the course instructor. Supervisors must be tenured or tenure track faculty. Once you've secured agreement from a faculty member to supervise your capstone you must notify the MACT office.

It is very important that you and your supervisor establish and maintain a good working relationship. When you embark upon your research, you will, in consultation with your supervisor, negotiate agreements concerning the research to be undertaken, the frequency of supervisory meetings, and a timetable outlining your research program. The timetable must include registering in the capping project course (COMM 900). You must complete the capping project course in order to complete the requirements on the MACT program and be eligible to graduate. Fees are assessed with each registration into the COMM 900 course.

When you and your supervisor have determined that you are ready, contact the MACT office to request registration.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA POLICIES

The following policies are a guide for your use. You can also check with MACT staff for clarification, if required. Also, please note that the policies included are part of a larger body of University of Alberta policies and are offered here for your easy reference. A full listing of policies can be found in the [University of Alberta calendar](#)

The MACT program, like all other graduate programs at the University of Alberta, is subject to the policies and regulations of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR)

You are strongly encouraged to review the [FGSR section](#) of the University of Alberta calendar to familiarize yourself with the policies, deadlines and procedures that apply to all graduate students.

ACADEMIC STANDING

The passing mark in any course taken while registered in the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research is a grade of C+ or 2.3 on the 4 point scale.

All students in graduate degree programs must maintain a minimum cumulative program grade point average of 2.7 out of 4 throughout the program. A student who does not maintain this GPA will be asked to withdraw.

DROPPING A COURSE

The University of Alberta has strict deadlines for students who wish to drop or withdrawing from a course. There are penalties for not meeting these deadlines.

How to drop a course

If you want to drop a MACT *elective* you can use the Bear Tracks online registration system to drop the course. If the course is offered by department permission only, you will need to fill out a Course Delete form, and have it signed by us and the department offering the course. The department offering the course will then drop you from the course.

If you need to drop a MACT *core course*, contact your academic advisor or the MACT office. You are advised to discuss this change to your study plan with us before dropping core courses.

Dropping a course without penalty

Check the current University Calendar for exact dates. Each term as a deadline by which you can drop courses and receive a fees refund. Should you need to drop a course during this time, it will not appear on your student record.

Withdrawing from a course with penalty

If you withdraw from a course after the Add/Drop deadline, you will face a financial penalty. There are normally two official withdrawal dates per term. The first will result in a financial penalty of 50% of your course fees and a W on your official transcript, and the second will result in a 100% financial penalty of your course fees and a W on your transcript. Check the current University Calendar for term withdrawal dates.

Withdrawing from a course requires the use of a Withdrawal form, available from the MACT office or at the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research.

COURSE FAIL

Should you not complete your coursework, you will receive a grade of either IN5 (incomplete fail – grade of 0.0 assigned) or NC (failure – no grade point value assigned). You will also fail your course if your mark is under the minimum course pass mark of 2.3 on the 4 point scale (C+).

If your grade point average (GPA) is under the minimum academic standing of 2.7 on the 4 point scale, you may not be allowed to continue in the program. If this happens, the MACT office will receive correspondence from the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research concerning your student status. MACT may recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research that you withdraw from the program and the University or be allowed to continue in the program for a specified probationary period.

RE-TAKING A COURSE

Should you not obtain an acceptable grade, or fail to complete a course that is required of your graduate program, you must obtain the approval of your department (MACT) and the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research to retake the course. You must also obtain a passing grade on the repeated course.

In calculating your GPA, both the original failing grade and the grade received when the course is retaken will be used. The failing grade AND the grade achieved on the repeated course will appear on your transcript. A grade of IN5 (incomplete fail) is counted as a numeric grade of 0.0 in the calculation of GPA.

COURSE INCOMPLETE

If you do not complete your coursework by the end of term, you are expected to contact your instructor to negotiate a suitable extension deadline by which you will complete your coursework. A temporary grade of IN(incomplete) and the extension deadline will be entered into your student record. If the work is not completed by this deadline, the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research will assign a grade of IN5 (incomplete fail). A grade of IN5 is equivalent to a grade of zero and does become part of the cumulative grade point average. This can have an impact on

eligibility for convocation.

If the work can not be completed by the deadline, contact your instructor and the MACT office **in advance** of the deadline date to discuss a further extension. All grade extensions must be approved by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research and must be requested before the original completion deadline entered in your student record.

POSTPONING A CORE COURSE

As discussed earlier under "The Cohort Model", deciding not to take a core course in the order in which the curriculum rolls out requires some thought and planning. Before doing so, you must discuss this change of plan with the Director. Your request should be made in writing to the Director, who will consult with you on a new schedule. A copy of the new study schedule will be kept in your student file.

A change to your study plan may extend the duration and cost of your program (i.e. continuing program fee).

MAINTAINING REGISTRATION

Students, in the MACT **course-based** stream, must register in and complete a minimum of one 3-credit course or in M REG 800 Maintaining Registration between September to August each year to keep their program active. If registration lapses, the university requires that students re-apply for admission. The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research imposes a fee of approximately $1500 (subject to change) for re-admission as well as the $100 application fee. There is no guarantee of re-admission.

Thesis route students must maintain full time registration in fall and winter terms (9 credits per term) Consult your academic advisor to determine your course schedule.

TRANSFER CREDIT

Transfer Credit refers to the formal transfer of credit for a course(s) which has been earned outside the program and may be granted by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, provided the course(s) has not been counted toward a previous degree or program and was not used to satisfy admission requirements of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research.

In the MACT program, graduate level courses taken outside the program may be considered for transfer of credit as electives. Prior to registering in a course outside the program, consult with the Director regarding the appropriateness of the course as an elective. Once you have received the approval of the Director, you can work directly with the department or institution offering the course to register. After you have completed the course, the MACT office will require notice from you that the course is complete. The request for transfer credit must be initiated by you. If the course was taken through another institution (i.e. University of Calgary), have an official transcript sent to the MACT office. We will then complete the appropriate paperwork to recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research that you receive transfer credit for the course as an elective in the MACT program.

Graduate level courses taken prior to admission to the MACT program (5 years or less) may be considered for credit, however, this is done on a case by case basis. Consult the MACT office for more information.

The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research makes the final decision on all requests for transfer credit and if some cases may refuse the request.

Grade Appeals Process

The *Faculty of Arts Grade Appeal Procedures* states:

> "Arts Faculty Council believes that the instructors are incontestably in the best possible position to assess the performance of their students and that Departments (through the Chair) are the custodians of acceptable standards of grading practices within the Department."

Students may appeal their **final grade** in a class. All details regarding grade appeals are included in the *Grade Appeal Procedures*, but in general the steps are:
   a) In the first instance, the student discusses the grade with the instructor.
   b) If the student is still not satisfied, the student may discuss the case with the Chair (or designate) of the Department offering the course. The designate for the MACT program is the academic director (Dr. Gordon Gow)
   c) If the case is still not resolved, the student may appeal to the Associate Dean (Student Programs) in writing. The Associate Dean will consider all factors outlined by the student, and consult with the Department Chair, and if necessary with the instructor.
   d) In those instances where the student remains unsatisfied the student may appeal to the Faculty of Arts Academic and Grade Appeals Committee.
   e) After the committee has considered the case and made a ruling, there is no further recourse for appeal.

Appeal Deadlines:

Term	Fall	Winter & Full Year	Spring & Summer
To instructor & Department Chair (or designate)	30 days from posting of grade on Bear Tracks	30 days from posting of grade on Bear Tracks	30 days from posting of grade on Bear Tracks
To Associate Dean	Within 7 days of receiving instructor's response	Within 7 days of receiving instructor's response	Within 7 days of receiving instructor's response
To AAGAC - regardless of term	21 calendar days after delivery of the Associate Dean's decision		

Grounds for Appeal

Only the following may constitute grounds for an appeal:
- Errors in calculation
- Procedural errors
- Failure to consider all relevant factors
- Bias and/or discrimination

The following are NOT Grounds for Appeal
- Disliking the instructor's marking scheme
- Coming close to the instructor's cut-off point for a higher grade
- Disagreeing with the instructor's judgment about the quality of submitted work

WITHDRAWING FROM THE PROGRAM

You are able to withdraw from MACT and the University at any time. The MACT program will usually be able to help you by providing alternative study options, allowing you to "stop-out" for a while, etc. Please consult with MACT staff and the Director before you decide to withdraw from the program and the University of Alberta.

If you choose to withdraw completely from MACT and the University, you must let the MACT office know in writing. At that point, we will send you the official University of Alberta Withdrawal form, which you will fill out, sign, and return to us. We will then forward it to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research so that your formal withdrawal, from the program and the University, can be processed.

If your course or research work is unsatisfactory, the MACT office and the University of Alberta may require you to withdraw.

FEES

Your fee assessment is available, each term, on Bear Tracks. You will not receive a hardcopy of the fee assessment. Unpaid fees will result in denial of access to course registration and convocation.

PROGRAM FEES

The MACT program fee is $3000 (CDN) per year for the first two years and is assessed in the spring term. If you are unable to complete the program requirements within a two-year period, a continuing program fee of $1000 per year will apply. Your program fee assessment is available on Bear Tracks.

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks for the whole program are estimated to cost around $1000 - $1500. Prices fluctuate, so please view this amount as an estimate. Texts can be purchased from the University of Alberta bookstore or via online vendors or publishers. Instructors will list required texts in their course syllabus if they need to be purchased. Some instructors rely on e-books and online library resources.

CONVOCATION

There are two Convocation ceremonies at the University of Alberta each year: June and November. You will be eligible to graduate after meeting all requirements of the MACT program.

Deadlines For Convocation

The MACT internal deadlines are:
- Spring convocation – 25 March
- Fall convocation – 25 August

For these deadlines students will have completed the MACT Convocation Checklist for Course-based students:

1. Successfully complete all 7 core and 3 elective courses and the research project course.

2. Emailed confirmation from your project supervisor that your capping research project is complete to the MACT office.

3. Submit a PDF of your finished project to the MACT office mact@ualberta.ca

4. Submit the completed ERA Author Permission form to the MACT office to authorize the posting of your capping project to the University of Alberta Library Education and Research Archive (ERA). Learn more about ERA https://era.library.ualberta.ca/

5. For students admitted in Spring 2017 and onward: Submit your completed Individual Development Plan and PD Completion form with accompanying documentation of participation to mact@ualberta.ca

6. Ensure all eligible electives taken outside the MACT program or prior to admission have been transferred for credit. Check your student record on Bear Tracks.

7. Confirm via Bear Tracks that all fees and fines have been paid in full.

8. Apply to graduate via Bear Tracks. Deadlines change each year so check the U of A convocation website (within the Registrar's Office site) for exact deadlines. They are generally in early April for spring and early October for fall convocation.

9. Guidelines for formatting your capstone project are available in the second half of the MACT Student Handbook.

MACT Thesis students should consult the [FGSR website](#) for information on thesis preparation, requirements and deadlines

Applying for Convocation

Graduate students apply for convocation after all requirements of the degree are complete. This is done via Bear Tracks and only you can make this application.

After the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research receives your notice of completion form (submitted by the MACT office), they will change your University record to reflect that you have completed the program. They will also forward your name to the Office of the Registrar so that you can be included on the Convocation list. You will then receive information by email from the Convocation office about your Convocation date, guest tickets, and gown rental and pickup.

If you attend the Convocation ceremony, you will receive your degree parchment when you pick up your Convocation package (guest tickets, gown, etc.). If you do not attend the ceremony, you will receive your parchment in the mail. Please keep your mailing/contact information current in Bear Tracks as this is the address to

which your parchment will be mailed. More information is available directly from the [University of Alberta Convocation Office](#)

A webcast of the convocation ceremonies is live streamed on the University main [webpage](#) on convocation day. [An archive of past ceremonies is also available](#)

CORE COURSE OVERVIEW

In this section, we provide an overview of each of the core courses in the program.

COMM 501: APPLIED RESEARCH IN COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

Introduction to quantitative and qualitative approaches for conducting research into technology-mediated communications. Guides students in their topic selection and development for their culminating project.

COMM 502: HUMAN COMMUNICATION

Survey of classic theories and emerging perspectives in communication studies. Emphasizes the development of skills for analyzing and understanding communication in context.

COMM 503: SOCIAL IMPACT OF DIGITAL MEDIA

This course explores the social impact of digital communications, with a specific focus on new and emerging social media and networks. Course themes cover a broad range of topics on the history and development of digital communications including social networks, virtual communities, and participatory culture. This course also touches on legal, ethical, and practical dimensions of digital communications as they realte to a range of personal and professional contexts.

COMM 504: ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

Explores the complexity and dynamism in the reciprocal relationship between communication, technology, and organizational form. Includes the major approaches to organizational design.

COMM 505: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY

This course examines current and emerging issues in communications and technology with an emphasis on providing professional with an advanced understanding of developments in the field informed by historical and critical theoretical perspectives.

COMM 506: STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS IN A DIGITAL WORLD

This course covers the conceptual and practical foundations for effective strategic communications management. It provides professionals with the insights and skills needed to integrate digital media into the strategic communications planning for a range of organizations including non-profit, education, government, health and provide sectior.

COMM 509: SEMINAR IN RESEARCH DESIGN

This seminar provides a hands-on approach to understanding the principles and practices of research design as students carry out preparatory work for their capstone project

COMM 900: DIRECTED RESEARCH PROJECT

(After completion of all core and elective courses)

Under supervision, students undertake a capstone project that addresses a practical problem. Issue or objective related to communications and technology

ELECTIONS OF MACT STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Each cohort is encouraged to nominate and elect a cohort representative. These students are spokespersons for their cohort and may be invited to participate on behalf of their cohort when the MACT program or the Faculty of Arts is seeking student feedback or advice. Spring Institute is a good time of year to complete this process.

CAPSTONE PROJECT GUIDELINES

COMM 900 Directed Research Project

Revised July 2020

SUMMARY

These guidelines are provided to assist you as you undertake the capstone research project for course based students in the MACT program. An approved capstone project requires you to take responsibility for conducting original research into the application of a chosen aspect of communications technology in a substantial area of personal or professional interest. The capstone project is compulsory for the Master of Arts in Communications and Technology (MACT) degree course-based route. COMM 900 has a course weight of 6 credits. By comparison all course cores are 3 credits.

COMM 900 is designed to assess your ability to:
- identify, clarify, and investigate a problem/topic;
- apply theory to practice;
- locate, analyze, and integrate relevant literature;
- gather, analyze, and interpret data;
- consider the application of the findings of the study;
- complete satisfactorily a comprehensive project that represents an original contribution to professional knowledge and practice in the field of communications and technology.

Nature of Project

The capstone research project is designed to conclude study in the MACT. Its practical and professional focus should integrate the core areas of study in the program through an in-depth, independently managed and conducted research project. It must be successfully completed, along with the required coursework, before students are awarded their degree.

Successful completion of the project entails these things:
- a research topic approved by your project supervisor
- the exploration of theory, practice or both, resulting in knowledge or insights about the topic
- the documentation of that research according to the guidelines set forth in this handbook

- the presentation of the draft research proposal to your colleagues (a part of COMM 501)
- the development of your proposal into a full research design plan, grounded in existing literature about the topic (a part of COMM 509)
- the presentation of your research as a completed project to your supervisor

Your project may take the form of one of the following:

- formal analysis of management practice, organizational processes, or policy
- formative or summative evaluation of a program, initiative, or project
- case study, using secondary documents, survey data, or interviews
- replication of a previous study, with either the introduction of a new variable or the analysis of a changed context

You are encouraged to consider each of these categories to determine which will best suit your academic and professional goals. Each category implies a different method of applying theory and of data-gathering.

Your completed capstone project will be published to the [MACT community on the University of Alberta Libraries ERA site](#) after convocation. A potential outcome of your project is publication elsewhere. As you plan for and complete your project, you are encouraged to consider opportunities to publish or otherwise disseminate your project findings.

Relationship to COMM 501

COMM 501 (Applied Research in Communications and Technology), will be your first introduction into the concepts and theory associated with graduate research. Through the activities, readings and assignments of COMM 501, you will explore both quantitative and qualitative research issues, examine each part of the research process, and actually begin constructing parts of your draft research proposal. The expertise gained in the study of COMM 501 will help you move forward to COMM 509, and to the completion of the project in COMM 900.

If you have a good idea of what area of research you will be interested in, it's useful to find related areas of interest in your other courses, both core and elective, that can contribute to your final project. It is customary in graduate work to build a research focus that includes your areas of interest through many of your readings and writings. If this is not possible, because you are uncertain of your final research topic, that is acceptable. However you are encouraged to consult with your academic advisor.

The purpose of COMM 501 is to prepare you for tackling your final project. The assignments you complete in 501 will serve as components of a draft proposal that you will complete with your project supervisor. Your research interests may shift to another topic, necessitating the preparation of another draft proposal for your final project, under the guidance of your project supervisor. Although this route takes more time, it is an acceptable way to proceed.

As you enter into the relationship with your project supervisor, you will bring forward the completed assignments from COMM 501, as a starting point for discussions of your capping research project topic.

Relationship to COMM 509

COMM 509 (Seminar in Research Design) takes off where COMM 501 ends. Working through a series of readings and weekly activities, you will build on the research proposal developed in COMM 501. You will conduct a comprehensive literature review exploring past research on the topic and develop a research design to guide your Capstone work. At the end of COMM 509, you will have completed the literature review guiding your research question and developed a number of research project management resources to help launch your independent research in COMM 900.

COMM 509 directly links to your COMM 900 work by providing a structured means to engage in Capstone research and writing activities. Through COMM 509 you will both expand and narrow your research interests, exploring the breadth of existing work on your topic while pinpointing the specific research question that will guide your Capstone. You will also develop, in collaboration with your cohort, a series of planning tools and other resources, including an email 'pitch' and project plan to your potential supervisor. The two major assignments in COMM 509, an Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review, will support and provide material for your Capstone project report.

COMM 900 CAPSTONE PROJECT: FIRST STEPS

Before you enroll in the Capstone Project Course

COMM 900

Although "official" work does not begin on your project until you are registered in COMM 900, in reality you are able to attend to it in various ways before that time. Registration in COMM 900 alerts FGSR that you are prepared to complete the project either by April or August of that year. You may register multiple times in COMM 900, as necessary, without penalty. Tuition is assessed with each

registration in this 6-credit course.

Developing Your Draft Proposal

Together with your supervisor, you will refine, redevelop (from COMM 501 and 509) or develop a proposal that demonstrates:

- that you have identified an interesting and worthwhile problem for investigation, and;
- that you have the means for conducting a viable investigation within the timeframe available.

Your proposal should follow the format given in the following pages. Every proposal should include a timeline that identifies stages or milestones that can be used to plan your research.

The word length for the proposal should be approximately 2500 words. Your research proposal should contain the following parts:

- Proposed title of the project
- Research question
- Literature review showing the theoretical base of the proposed study
- Objectives of the study
- Hypotheses, where relevant
- Methodology
- Timeline
- Curriculum vitae of the researcher
- Copies of draft research instruments, such as survey forms.

Choosing a Supervisor

Choosing the most appropriate supervisor for you and your topic is very important. We will provide opportunities for you in the Spring Institute to meet potential supervisors. You will also learn more about the student-supervisor relationship in COMM 509, which provides an opportunity to propose a research plan to your potential supervisor during one of the weekly activities. While searching for a supervisor, you are encouraged to interview faculty personally to establish an overlap of interests, a compatible work ethic, and a personal affinity.

It is very important that you and your supervisor establish and maintain a good working relationship. In general, students who maintain regular contact with their supervisors are more successful in their studies than those who do not, although you will also benefit from the support and suggestions of your peers. Supervisors can encourage and guide their students, but the outcome of graduate study ultimately depends on the student's capacity to benefit from the supervisor's guidance.

When you embark upon your research, you will, in consultation with your supervisor, negotiate agreements concerning the research to be undertaken, the

frequency of supervisory meetings, and a timetable outlining your research program.

Approval of Supervisor

The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) designates the authority to approve the appointment of faculty members as supervisors of student research activities to the MACT program. It is your responsibility to ensure that approval is requested and received. The steps of the approval process is listed below:

- You should have the agreement of a tenure track faculty member to act as supervisor for your final project by **by the end of COMM 509**
- Confirmation by email (to eileen.crookes@ualberta.ca) from both you and the faculty member of this agreement must be sent to the MACT office.

Duties of a Supervisor

The following is what is expected of a supervisor:

- To guide you in the refinement of a topic.
- To assist you in a literature search by giving guidance on relevant literature and advice as to how this may be accessed.
- To advise you on, and assist you in determining, an appropriate methodology for your research.
- To be in contact with you according to your agreed schedule to monitor your progress and provide feedback.
- To make constructive written and verbal comments on the work you submit, within a reasonable amount of time.
- To engage in discussion with you at the agreed times.
- To respond promptly to your email or telephone messages.
- To assess completion of the project and assign the final grade (Pass/Fail)

Your project supervisor is not expected to provide advice and information regarding basic writing matters such as grammar, punctuation, and style. The American Psychological Association (APA) citation style is the standard expected for your project, and you are encouraged to develop your skills in using APA as you complete assignments for your first two or three core courses. Investing in a current edition of the *APA Manual* will serve you well through your program of study.

Your Obligations to Your Supervisor

- Be in contact with your supervisor as agreed.
- Undertake the work that you and your supervisor agreed would be completed

before each meeting.
- Respond promptly to telephone or email messages.

Please note that any questions you may have about the MACT program that go beyond the scope of the project should be directed to either your academic advisor, the program director or MACT administrative staff.

Changing Project Supervisor

Sometimes it is necessary for a student to change project supervisors. You are encouraged to discuss this with your supervisor. If you and your supervisor agree that a change of supervisor is appropriate:

- Confirmation of the agreement to dissolve the student/supervisor arrangement from both the you and the supervisor is required by email to the MACT office at eileen.crookes@ualberta.ca
- Confirmation by email from the new supervisor to the MACT office at eileen.crookes@ualberta.ca is required.

Supervisory Meetings

The supervisory relationship for the final project in MACT is largely a distance relationship. However, for purposes of discussion, exchanges with your supervisors will be referred to herein as "meetings." The frequency of supervisory meetings will vary during the course of your project. You will find that you may need more guidance in the early stages of your project.

It is important not to discount the value of communicating even when things seem to be progressing smoothly. Your meetings should have a mutually agreed focus and should, wherever possible, be based on written material that you have produced for that purpose, preferably supplied to your supervisor two or three days prior to the meeting so that your work can be given proper consideration.

Your supervisor will read and comment on drafts of your work, but the completeness and quality of the final version is your responsibility. The final marking of your work may well take into account material that was present in a draft but not commented on.

You can expect your supervisor to comment on the overall structure of your drafts and on points of detail, including matters of prose style and referencing. Reading drafts and commenting on them is a time-consuming business, and your supervisor will responsibility for supervision of other students and providing feedback to those students while working with you.

You do not need your supervisor's permission to solicit comments from others on your drafts. If you do receive substantial help from readers other than your

supervisor, you should acknowledge their help in the appropriate place in the final version of your work.

Establishing a Supervisor / Student Contract

It is very important that you and your supervisor establish and maintain a good working relationship. In general, students who make use of supervision are more successful in their studies than those who do not, although you will also benefit from the support and suggestions of your peers. Supervisors can encourage and guide their students, but the outcome of graduate study ultimately depends on the student's capacity to benefit from the supervisor's guidance. Below is a template of a contract that you may wish to set up with your supervisor.

Task		Deadline
Student signature		Date:
Supervisor signature		Date:

Potential Supervisors

Core MACT faculty as well as faculty from within the Faculty of Arts should be your first consideration for supervisor. Professors from other Faculties can be also be approached but it is remembered that you discuss this with the COMM 509 instructor first.

Please note that supervisors from outside of the University of Alberta are generally

not approved.

CHOOSING A TOPIC

You have considerable scope in your choice of topic, subject to the constraints of the feasibility of the topic and the availability of appropriate supervision. However, the problem should be narrow enough in scope so that it can be completed within the allotted time frame. The MACT emphasizes the relevance of its content to the contemporary workplace and society. This does not preclude more theoretical work associated with the workplace. The process of choosing an appropriate research topic is covered during COMM 501 and COMM 509.

Although you submitted a proposal for research with your application package, you are not bound to that idea. Ideas for possible topics may come from work undertaken from courses, from your private study, from discussions with colleagues or faculty, from the literature, or from your workplace. Academic staff will gladly discuss the choice of topic with you; however, faculty will not present you with a topic. Ideally, you should find a topic that holds great interest for you as you will spend much time developing this area. The formulation of a topic may well involve a considerable amount of preparatory work, and so is discussed in detail in COMM 501 and 509.

Final topic approval will come from your academic supervisor. Capstone projects that are not within the field of communications and technology will not normally be approved. Helpful points in choosing a topic:

- What intrinsic interest does your topic area hold for you? Your chances of succeeding will be greater if the topic interests you.
- Your employer may have a topic that needs investigation. A routine work report prepared in the course of your employment does not constitute a research report. The project must be your own work and you may not submit any document that contains a substantial amount of collaboration work.
- Read recent high quality academic and professional journals in your area of interest to familiarize yourself with current issues in the field.
- Your research may expand upon studies from your other courses.
- Be sure to choose a topic that can be contained within the constraints of the project.
- What resources are available for your topic? Do you have access to them?
- You will find that writing your draft proposal helps you clarify your ideas.
- You should find that sharing your ideas with your colleagues and group members is helpful. Talk about your ideas. Offer constructive criticism to others.
- Throughout your program of study, keep a notebook of all useful ideas and resources that could assist you in developing your potential topic.
- Defining your topic happens in tandem with determining your method of

investigation (methodology). The COMM 501 and COMM 509 instructors will offer suggestions on an appropriate research methodology for your topic.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE CAPSTONE PROJECT

Overview

In the capstone project, you will be studying a problem in depth and gaining hands-on experience in designing and conducting an applied research project. You will directly experience the difficulties inherent in research and will gain an appreciation of the essentially tentative nature of the knowledge, evidence and data available to researchers and scholars in the social sciences.

Some comments follow on the different parts of the capstone project.

Length:

- The applied research project should be 60 - 80 pages (double spaced). It should be concise, follow a logical sequence, and contain all the requisite components, including bibliographic references. You should refer clearly to appendices.

Style:

- The final project should be written in formal academic style in accordance with the requirements of the current APA style guide.
- You should provide appendices which detail all primary evidence collected, any correspondence, and details of any questionnaires or interview schedules. These are not included in the word count.
- Projects should be word-processed and double spaced. Font must be Times New Roman 12 point. Individual entries in the bibliography may be single-spaced, but you should double space between entries.
- Your submitted project must have the title, author's full name (including your middle name) and year on the title page. (See Appendix A for required format)
- Cited references should be accurate and consistent. This is a requirement of good scholarship.
- Ensure that there are no typographical or grammatical errors. The use of a third party proof-reader is recommended. Keep in mind that your work will be posted to the UAlberta Libraries ERA website

Components of the Capstone Project

Preliminary pages (do not number these pages)

Title page - See Appendix A for required format

Acknowledgements page - It is usual practice to acknowledge supervisors, and anyone who has offered particular assistance, while respecting confidentiality.

Disclaimers- Required when projects make recommendations upon which an organization or individual might act.

Table of Contents- Specifying chapters and/or sections and their page numbers in the main body of the project.

Abstract page - A brief description (150 – 200 words) of the work. This should include a short description of the research problem, a brief comment on the direction taken; and a summary of the conclusion.

Main body of project

The main body of your project contains the following parts:

Introduction

A general background to the problem that is meaningful to a reader unfamiliar with the area. Discuss why this study is worthwhile. The introduction includes the problem statement.

Problem and Research Question. A general statement of the problem followed by specific question(s) that will be explored.

Literature Review

The literature review provides a theoretical perspective that directly relates to the problem. It interprets and synthesizes relevant ideas and concepts. This literature should give direction to, and guide the design of, the study. It will also provide a context in which to interpret and discuss the findings. Basic values and assumptions will be revealed through the selection and interpretation of the literature but should be explicitly stated as well.

Methodology

This is a detailed description about how the study will be conducted. The methodology will include descriptions of the sources of data, construction of data/collection techniques/instrumentation, description of the sample or participants, data/collection procedures, and methods of analysis.

Findings

Present a clear description of the findings along with the procedures used to sort, code and interpret the data. Evidence must be presented that supports the categorization, theory or interpretation.

Discussion/Conclusion

This section includes the summary/ conclusions of the findings,

consideration of weaknesses and validity issues, and directions for future research.

And, at the end…

Following the main text of the project are these two parts:

References

This is a complete listing of all references using APA Style.

Appendix

The appendix should include materials (such as the survey questionnaire used or the informed consent agreement provided to respondents) that are important for a clear understanding of the study but too cumbersome to be included in the body of the text.

Project Assessment

Your project supervisor will be responsible for determining that your final project has been completed satisfactorily and will submit a grade of Pass or Fail for COMM 900.

The criteria used for assessment include the demonstration of the following:

- identify, clarify, and investigate a problem/topic;
- apply theory to practice;
- locate, analyze, and integrate relevant literature;
- gather, analyze, and interpret data;
- consider the application of the findings of the study;
- satisfactorily complete a comprehensive project that represents an original contribution to professional knowledge and practice in the field of communications and technology.

You are expected to use the APA (American Psychological Association) citation style, and to write clearly and economically. Your final draft must be free of typos and spelling mistakes.

Plagiarism

Although you will benefit from discussing your final project with colleagues and associates, you must be aware of the fine line between such exchanges and collaboration or plagiarism and other academic offences.

Normally, academic offences such as plagiarism result in disciplinary action. For more information, please refer to the Academic Integrity website. This site also provides a link to the Code of Student Behaviour which contains relevant information about academic integrity.

ETHICS, PERMISSIONS, DISCLAIMERS, COPYRIGHT

Ethics and Disclaimers

Because the University of Alberta enjoys a strong association with the community and with associated workplaces, and because we appreciate their goodwill and cooperation, we endeavour to maintain high standards of courtesy, professionalism, and adherence to ethical and confidentiality guidelines. As a student researcher at the University of Alberta, you are entrusted with maintaining our reputation. Depending on the methodology you employee in your research project, you may need to make an application to Research Ethics. Your project supervisor will guide you in this decision.

Please make every effort, in dealing with outside persons or organizations, to be professional and courteous. You should identify yourself, your status and the name and nature of your project. You should also provide contact information for both yourself and your supervisor.

This information is most often contained in a letter that outlines to prospective respondents, employers, and/or workplaces, the nature and intent of your final project as you seek permission to access them or their data. The letter should also address issues of confidentiality, data collection, handling and methodology, data storage, and ultimately, data disposal.

This letter should be sent on university letterhead and a digial template can be obtained from University Relations. You will need your CCID and password to log into the site to download templates. Any formal written materials (letters, questionnaires) associated with data gathering must be approved by your supervisor before being sent.

A sample letter/consent form can be found in Appendix B.

Ethics Guidelines

The University of Alberta requires high ethical standards in the conduct of all research projects.

All research involving human subjects is subject to the Faculty's Research Ethics Board and will require its approval **before** data collection may begin.

If your project involved human subjects or respondents, you must discuss its ethical implications with your supervisor. It is your responsibility to ensure you

have appropriate permission to undertake your research.

The principles guiding the Research Ethics Board are as follows:
- Informed consent free of coercion
- Avoidance of conflict of interest
- Respect for rights of privacy and confidentiality
- Minimization of risk of harm to subjects
- Special care taken of vulnerable participants (i.e., children)
- Reporting of data findings back to participants

Ethics applications are made online. More information is available on the [Research Ethics Office website](#)

Any data collected before approval has been granted may be deemed unusable and could put your project in jeopardy. Therefore, do not begin data collection until your ethics application has been approved.

Data, Storage and Disposal

Original date collection for your research project must be stored securely. For hard copy data (i.e. paper survey) this means storage in a locked cabinet in a locked room. Digital records must be password protected. University of Alberta General Faculties Council policy requires secure storage for five years before secure disposal.

Copyright

As author, you retain the copyright to your project.

In conformity with the Copyright Act, there must be no substantial amount of copyrighted material in the project. Please consult the section, Copyright Material, in the Thesis Handbook, available from Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research on their website.

MANAGING YOUR CAPSTONE PROJECT

The capstone project is a large and ambitious task that will benefit from your careful planning and management. You are responsible for scheduling your own work program in order to meet your timeline. The organizational skills necessary to complete your research successfully are important parts of the graduate experience and will complement the topic expertise and knowledge that you will acquire. You will cover some of these issues in COMM 509, which focuses on research design and leads into your Capstone project.

Graduate students completing their research can have a sense of working alone and in isolation. Often, the end of scheduled classes signals the beginning of a long, lonely stretch for graduate students, with no consistent source of support, encouragement, or academic collegiality. Maintaining your relationship with your project supervisor through regular email or phone meetings is crucial to your success.

Here are some helpful hints:

- Plan your time well, taking into account the time needed to write up your research. Writing as you go often allows you to formulate your approach in manageable stages, instead of facing a mountain of data at the end.
- Be vigilant with your data collection. Know when to stop so that you don't end up with far more material than you can handle.
- Discuss difficulties immediately with your supervisor.
- Keep a project journal where you record everything connected to the project: sources, references, dates, meetings, insights, quotes, and so on.
- Back up your computer files. Do not needlessly lose important data!
- Keep notes from your meetings with your supervisor.
- Stay in close contact with your peers. Support each other.

Graduation Requirements and Timeline

There are two convocation ceremonies in an academic year. One convocation ceremony is in June (spring) and the other occurs in November (fall).

Those students who do not meet graduation requirements in the spring and therefore hope to graduate in the fall should plan to complete their final project (COMM 900) by 25 August. Students must be aware that they will be charged a program continuation fee and instructional fees for second or third registrations into COMM 900.

It is your responsibility to ensure that any transfer credit has been entered into your student record by both the MACT program office and FGSR. Your project supervisor ensures that the "Report of Completion of Course-Based Master's Degree" form has been signed and also by the program Director then submitted to FGSR.

Submitting your Capstone project

While you may take pleasure in celebrating the completion of your final project, its life with the Communications and Technology program and the University of Alberta has only just begun! It will become part of the growing collection of MACT capping projects in the University of Alberta Libraries Education and Research Archive.

The Communications and Technology Graduate Program Community on ERA can be found on the [University of Alberta Libraries website](#)

Because each project comprises such an intense and thorough body of knowledge, an applied program such as the MACT is especially interested in integrating your research findings into learning experiences for the MACT students that follow in your footsteps.

To this end, you will be asked to submit the finished project to the MACT program as a PDF and the signed author permission form.

Please remember that proper formatting of your project is required and is outlined in the "Detailed Description of the Final Project" section of this document

Author Permission Form

Working with the University of Alberta Library, MACT has established a community on ERA (Education and Research Archive) in which the capping projects of our graduates will be housed. ERA allows open access to University of Alberta intellectual content which will make the research and scholarship of our MACT graduates publicly searchable and available to read. Each student project will receive a permanent URL once their capstone is posted to ERA.

Deadlines For Convocation

Appendix A

Sample Title Page

Project Title

By

Your Full Name

Submitted to the Faculty of Arts

University of Alberta

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Communications and Technology

Date

Appendix B

Sample Cover Letter/Consent Form

The following example represents one approach to constructing this document. It is acceptable to create a format that works for you as long as the criteria are met.

The project is entitled, "A Formative Evaluation of the Distance Delivery of the MACT Courses."

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

A Formative Evaluation of the Distance Delivery of the MACT Courses

Investigator/researcher:

      Stanley Varnhagen

      492-3641

      stanley.varnhagen@ualberta.ca

Purpose of the Study:

The MACT program is an exciting new master's program for working professionals who manage communication issues and practices in a digital world. In order to allow students to continue working while learning, most courses are delivered on-line using asynchronous technologies.

This proposal outlines an extensive evaluation of the instructional technology used to deliver MACT courses.

Currently, the evaluation concerns itself with COMM 550, An Introduction to Electronic Commerce, the first MACT course to be delivered on-line.

COMM 550, which began in January 2000, has 19 students enrolled and continues to May, 2000.

Funding for the evaluation is partially provided by the Alberta Government through its Learning Enhancement Envelope.

Methodology

Participants will include current students. There are two phases to this evaluation:

Mid-Course Evaluation

Current MACT students will be asked to complete an online survey mid-course. Soon after completing this survey, some students will also be asked to participate in a focused course discussion. This evaluation will be more open-ended. Intended to see what students' views are currently. The focus of these evaluations will be in providing information back to the program that will allow course improvement, especially for the current courses.

End of Course Evaluation

The procedure will be repeated at the end of the course, with both an on-line survey and a focused discussion. This evaluation will be more detailed, and will focus on improving the course the next time it is offered.

Confidentiality

All information collected will be coded to protect the participant's anonymity and participants will be directed to not put any identifying information on surveys. Prior to releasing aggregated data to MACT program administrators, any identifying indicators will be removed. No information will be released until after course grades have been issued. Completion of these surveys is totally voluntary and will in no way affect your grades.

Time Commitment

The time required to complete the mid-course or exit survey is approximately one-half hour. Approximately 45 minutes will be required of those persons asked to participate in an interviews or focus group.

Funding Agency

This project is partially funded by a Learning Enhancement Envelope (LEE) grant from Alberta Learning.

Any Questions?

Please contact Stanley Varnhagen, Faculty of Extension at stanley.varnhagen@ualberta.ca or 492-3641.

Withdrawal from Study

You are free to withdraw from the research study at any time without any adverse consequences. There are no known risks or personal benefits from participation in this study.

Participant Informed Consent

I acknowledge that the research procedures have been explained to me, and that any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. In addition, I know that I may contact the person designated on this form, if I have further questions either now or in the future. I have been assured that the personal records relating to this study will be kept anonymous. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time and I will not be asked to provide a reason.

_____

(Date)

_____   _____

_____
(Printed Name of Participant)   (Signature of Participant)

_____   _____
(Printed Name of Investigator)   (Signature of Investigator)