

Communicating Across Contexts: Seneca's new communications course

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The new first-semester communications course, **COM101: Communicating Across Contexts**, will be offered to students enrolled in certificate, diploma, and advanced diploma programs in this Fall 2018 semester. The course is designed to develop transferrable communication skills by providing students with opportunities to engage in authentic forms of writing as well as revision opportunities and developing meta-cognition about writing and language (e.g., Anson, 2014; Clark & Hernandez, 2012; Graff, 2010). Faculty and administrators across full-time and part-time English and Liberal Studies (ELS) schools and campuses collaborated to develop the course and its resources. The course approach and content were developed with input from program and ELS faculty and administrators in order to meet the diverse needs of our students.

The assessments are mapped to the [course learning outcomes](#) and are varied to facilitate transfer of learning. The assessments include:

- a summary assessment
- an academic argument assessment
- “transfer” assessments (assessments that cut across various communication modalities such as infographics, letter writing, and journalistic writing that provide students with opportunities for reflection)
- formative assessments

The reading bank comprises open-source readings recommended by faculty; each reading was vetted by the Communications Working Group, comprising faculty and administrators across the Schools of English and Liberal Studies. Readings are to be used as tools to facilitate the development of communications skills, and fall into one of five categories: narrative, news (expository), news (persuasive), multimodal, and academic. Each section of COM101 will include one reading per category to ensure breadth and exposure to style, and a

minimum of one reading must be by an Indigenous author. Readings were reviewed by First Peoples@Seneca staff, where relevant.

The effectiveness of the new COM101 course will be evaluated by a research project led by a subcommittee of faculty and administrators. A research ethics application was submitted to Seneca's Research Ethics Board in July 2018 for the first phase of the research project that is scheduled to begin in Fall 2018. The results of the research project will provide feedback into the future iterations of the course. The study will triangulate three points of data sources that include student surveys, faculty surveys, and document analyses. The research project will be happening concurrently with the implementation of the new course, and results of the research will be presented at future Teaching & Learning Days.

View the [September 2018 issue of the Academic Newsletter](#).

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