

Course: DMED 561: Pitching for Digital Media Professionals 1 (3 units)
Term: Fall 2026
Instructor: Dr. Elisabeta Aida Osian
E-mail: elisabeta_osian@sfu.ca

Acknowledgement of Coast Salish Peoples and land

We respectfully acknowledge the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples on whose unceded traditional territories our campus resides.

Course description and objectives

This course immerses students in the process of pitching in digital media environments, through guided practice and project-based, community-engaged and experiential learning. Students will refine their verbal and non-verbal communication, build confidence and persuasive skills, master formal and informal registers, and design effective solutions to real-world problems.

Activities include short lectures, in-class workshops, individual, pair and team pitch assignments, project work and client-facing communication. Students will engage with emerging pitching formats and current industry best practices. Specialized terminology will cover project proposal structures and best practices, UI/UX design, game design, web graphics, software development, contemporary media theories, and other areas of digital media.

Note: Students enrolled in DMED 560, 561, 562, and 563 are taking them as part of the Master of Digital Media Technical Communication Bundle. Successful completion of all four courses is required prior to enrolling in other DMED courses.

By the end of this course, students will:

- Expand their media-related vocabulary and apply digital media terminology appropriately in formal and informal pitches.
- Strengthen their public-speaking skills, including non-verbal communication, pronunciation, and intonation, to achieve a more natural delivery.
- Develop essential MDM and job-market communication skills through interactions with guest speakers, role-play clients, and project simulations.
- Strengthen their ability to persuade, receive and implement feedback, and collaborate effectively through project-based learning.
- Develop community-engaged knowledge through experiential site visits and cultural exchanges that foster real-world experience, cross-cultural understanding, and meaningful connections with local and global communities.

Course format and language prerequisites

This 13-week course combines practical sessions and weekly labs centered on active, experiential learning rather than primarily lecture-based instruction. It emphasizes professional communication and real-world language use in digital media environments. A minimum of upper-intermediate English proficiency (*i.e.* IELTS 6.0, approximately CEFR B2) and some familiarity with digital media concepts in English are required. Students must bring a pen and notebook, a charged laptop and have access to canva.com. Additional materials will be specified as needed.

Tasks and assignments

Each week, students complete a pitching assignment on a specific topic, along with related graded and ungraded tasks. Weekly assignments are mandatory and must be presented in class. Graded assignments submitted after the deadline without prior approval will receive a 5% deduction per calendar day and will not be accepted after five days. Assignments that are not submitted will receive a grade of zero/F. Because pitches require live participation, missed presentations cannot normally be rescheduled. Students experiencing illness, emergencies or other extenuating circumstances must contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss alternative arrangements.

Teamwork - Project simulation

Students will participate in a project-based learning (PBL) experience called project simulation, which reflects, but does not replicate the workflow of an MDM pitch project. Team members will rotate roles while developing a digital solution for an industry role-play client and/or a cultural attraction in Metro Vancouver. The project incorporates experiential site visits, teamwork in a simulated Agile environment using relevant professional terminology, and self, peer, and instructor feedback. Pitching activities progress from individual to pair and group work, allowing students to develop foundational skills before applying them in increasingly collaborative contexts.

Course materials are protected by copyright. Recording, photographing or distributing class content is prohibited unless authorized by the instructor or required through an approved accessibility accommodation. When recording/photographing is authorized, students must obtain permission from everyone being recorded, including during experiential site visits. Confidential client and project information must not be shared outside the course.

* Course topics, activities and dates are subject to change. Any changes will be communicated in advance.
The square brackets indicate tentative subtopics

Week	Stage	Focus
1	Individual pitches	Pitching vs. presenting. Defining the terms.
2		Designing slides and visuals for an individual presentation/pitch. [short-form or social-media pitch, elevator pitch, one-slide pitch].
3		Time management and engagement in public speaking. [pitch decks vs. presentation decks]
4		Connecting experience with story and emotion. [speculative future pitch, impact and responsibility pitch]
5	Pair pitches	Technical clarity: presenting collaboratively to an audience.
6		Balancing content priorities with audience needs. [informative pitch]
7		Aligning strengths with the proposed solution. [user-story pitch] [reverse-pitch, challenge-response pitch]
8		Giving and receiving feedback, managing Q&A sessions. [feedback frameworks, asynchronous video pitch]
9	Group pitches	Group-pitch delivery: verbal and non-verbal communication.
10		Presenting problems, solutions and evidence. [live-demo pitch, data story-pitch]
11		Conflict resolution and effective teamwork.
12		Final project pitch event.
13	Course synthesis	Reflection and feedback.

Evaluation

Creating and presenting a pitch is crucial for conveying digital media concepts to clients and users but is often overlooked. This course emphasizes industry-best practices in slide design and pitching, continually updated for emerging tech trends. Assessment will be based on the following criteria:

Motivation, participation and attendance 15%

This grade will reflect your engagement in discussions, peer reviews, and formative assignments, as well as your professionalism and collaboration with peers and the instructor. Device use should be limited to class activities, and active participation is always expected.

Project development and teamwork 35%

The grade will be determined as follows:

1. Contribution and solution quality 10%
The team member completes assigned tasks, produces work of appropriate quality, and meets agreed-upon deadlines.
2. Collaboration 10%
The team member communicates respectfully, listens to others' ideas, contributes to shared decisions, and manages disagreements in a constructive manner.
3. Time and project management 5%
The team member attends agreed-upon meetings and completes work on time.
4. Initiative and self-organization 10%
The team member is well organized, takes initiative, communicates progress, and responds to changing project needs with a problem-solving mindset.

Final project pitch 50%

The final assignment is a synchronous pitch delivered to an audience and assessed individually. The grading criteria and rubric will be provided three weeks before the final pitch.

Grading profile

A+	95-100	Exceptional performance
A	90-94	Exceeding expectations
A-	85-89	Meeting expectations
B+	80-84	Approaching expectations
B	75-79	
B-	70-74	Below expectations
C	60-69	Far below expectations
F	0 – 59	Fail (Students must retake the course).

Use of generative AI

In accordance with [SFU guidance](#), individual instructors determine whether generative AI may be used in their courses, including the tasks for which it is permitted and the appropriate extent of its use. To reflect current digital media workplace practices, this course will include several opportunities to use generative AI ethically and effectively. AI use will be task-specific, and the instructor will indicate when it is permitted and to what extent. Students must transparently disclose and cite any AI use, critically evaluate its output, and remain fully responsible for all submitted work. Undisclosed or unauthorized AI use may violate SFU's Academic Integrity Policy.

Policies (Simon Fraser University)

Accommodations

[The university accommodates](#) students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please let your instructor know in advance, preferably the first week of class, if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. [The Centre for Accessible Learning](#) (CAL) will make every effort to assist students with disabilities in achieving their educational goals.

Academic integrity

The SFU Academic Integrity [website](#) has information on what academic dishonesty means, where you can find resources to help with your studies and the consequences of cheating. All members of the university are expected to uphold scholarly integrity and are responsible for how their conduct affects the community. Academic dishonesty undermines the university's values and is unfair and discouraging to the ones who complete their work honestly.

Inappropriate use of technology in coursework

If you are using generative AI to produce content that will be part of your graded work in the course, you must be transparent about your tools. Undeclared use of the tool/technology will be considered a violation of the academic integrity policy. Be aware that any tool used will require you to evaluate the output for accuracy and be responsible for making the appropriate corrections.

Graduate Studies notes

Important dates and deadlines for graduate students are found [here](#).