

Course: DMED 561: Pitching for Digital Media Professionals 1 (3 units)
Term: Fall 2026
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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, select and use appropriate 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 while focusing on specialized language development. The 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 media-related vocabulary and apply digital media terminology appropriately in formal and informal pitches.
- Strengthen public-speaking skills, including non-verbal communication, pronunciation, and intonation, to achieve a more natural delivery.
- Develop MDM and workplace communication skills through scripted and unscripted interactions with guest speakers, role-play clients and audiences in project simulations. Respond spontaneously to questions and adapt explanations to audience needs.
- Strengthen the ability to persuade, receive and apply 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

Weekly pitches on assigned topics and related lab tasks are mandatory and will be presented in class. Only the midterm and final pitches receive separate grades. Other weekly work is formative (ungraded practice with feedback). Students must apply instructor, client or peer feedback to revisions and subsequent pitches.

Without prior approval, late graded work loses 5% per calendar day and is not accepted after five days; unsubmitted graded work receives zero. Missed live graded pitches cannot be rescheduled. Students facing illness, emergencies or other extenuating circumstances must contact the instructor promptly to discuss alternatives.

Teamwork – pitch-project simulation

In a project-based simulation reflecting selected elements of an MDM pitch project, students rotate roles to develop a digital solution for an industry role-play client and/or a Metro Vancouver cultural attraction. Activities combine site visits, simulated Agile teamwork, professional terminology, and self, peer, client and instructor feedback. Pitches progress from individual to pair and group work, building skills for collaboration.

Course materials are protected by copyright. Recording, photographing or sharing class content requires instructor authorization unless required by an approved accessibility accommodation. Obtain permission from everyone recorded or photographed, including during on-site visits. Confidential client and project information must remain within 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	<i>Project simulation kick-off</i>	Connecting experience with story and emotion. [speculative future pitch, impact and responsibility pitch]
5	Pair pitching	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 pitching	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. Delivering team pitches to an audience and a role-play client.
13	Course synthesis	Reflection and feedback.

Assessments and grading

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:

Component	Weight	What is assessed
Participation, attendance and professionalism	15%	Attendance and active engagement in class discussions, peer reviews and formative assignments. This includes professionalism, collaboration with peers and the instructor, and limiting device use to class activities.
Project development and teamwork	35%	Your individual contribution to the project during the semester, collaboration, time management, initiative and self-organization (see breakdown below)
Midterm project pitch	25%	Your individual performance in the midterm pitch. The detailed rubric will be provided in advance.
Final project pitch	25%	Your individual performance in a live, synchronous pitch delivered to an audience. The grading criteria and rubric will be provided three weeks before the final pitch.
Total	100%	

The midterm and final pitch grades are weighted equally. Their average determines your grade for the pitch component, which accounts for 50% of your final course grade.

Project development and teamwork breakdown

Each percentage below is a share of your final course grade. Together, these criteria make up the 35% project development and teamwork component.

Criterion	Weight	What you need to demonstrate
Contribution and solution quality	10%	Completing assigned tasks and producing work of appropriate quality.
Collaboration	10%	Using respectful communication, listening to others' ideas, contributing to shared decisions and managing disagreements constructively.
Time and project management	5%	Attending team meetings and completing work on time.
Initiative and self-organization	10%	Staying organized, taking initiative, communicating progress and responding to changing project needs with a problem-solving mindset.
Total for this component	35%	

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 the course

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](#).