Course: DMED 562: Pitching for Digital Media Professionals 2 (3 units)
Term: Spring 2027
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Acknowledgement of Coast Salish Peoples and land

We respectfully acknowledge the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples on whose unceded traditional territories our campus resides.

Course description and objectives

This advanced soft-skills and communication course builds on DMED 561 to prepare students for MDM study and professional practice. Students develop persuasive digital media pitches that synthesize information, evaluate alternatives and defend proposals through sustained argument and spontaneous client interaction. Greater independence, linguistic precision, audience awareness and control of delivery are expected throughout the course.

Creative, game and storytelling case studies support the application of skills in the project simulation, comprising site visits, individual and team pitches, in person and remote delivery. Students apply specialized language across UI/UX, web and mobile applications, games and game design, animation, web graphics, software development, social media and contemporary media theories. Practice integrates verbal and non-verbal communication, team work, slide design, documentation and critical reflection.

By the end of this course students will

- Develop coherent, evidence-based arguments that synthesize project information, compare alternatives, qualify claims and justify digital media pitch-proposals.
- Adapt register, technical terminology and explanation depth to specialist and non-specialist audiences, using precise vocabulary, natural collocations and clear paraphrasing.
- Respond fluently to questions, interruptions and changing client requests by clarifying ambiguity, addressing objections and negotiating revisions.
- Combine emotional appeal, storytelling and rational support, applying frameworks to communicate reasons, explanations, demonstrations and future implications.

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- Control pronunciation, stress, rhythm, pacing and intonation, and use space, posture, gesture and eye contact purposefully.
- Coordinate persuasive team pitches with clear visual support and smooth transitions in both in-person and remote settings.
- Independently analyze delivery and feedback, identify recurring language problems, and apply and explain revisions that improve subsequent pitches.

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.

Course format and language prerequisites

The course combines 13 teaching weeks with a separate reading break. Practical lectures, live and recorded pitches and weekly labs develop advanced communication skills (productive and receptive) through case analyses, rehearsals, lexical progression, client interaction and project work. Students build on the upper-intermediate communication skills developed in DMED 561 and work with increasingly complex material, less scripted support and more demanding audience interaction. Digital media topics provide the context for language and communication development, technical or hard skills are not the focus of assessment. Students must bring a pen and notebook, a charged laptop and have access to canva.com. Tools for remote presentation and any additional materials will be specified as needed.

Tasks and assignments

Weekly pitches and lab tasks are mandatory, formative and will be presented in class. Completion, engagement and project contributions inform ongoing assessment, only midterm and final pitches receive separate grades. Students must apply weekly feedback, record contributions, language targets and revisions, and demonstrate their own communication skills in live pitches and Q&A.

Unless pre-approved, late graded work loses 5% per calendar day and will be rejected after five days. Unsubmitted graded work earns zero, missed live graded pitches cannot be rescheduled. Discuss extenuating circumstances with the instructor.

Teamwork and pitch project simulation

Starting in week 4, students rotate roles in an MDM simulation to develop and pitch a digital solution for a role-play client or Metro Vancouver cultural attraction. Activities combine site visits, Agile teamwork, professional terminology and feedback. The instructor and team members will track individual contributions. Project development and pitch performance are graded individually.

Course materials are copyrighted. Recording, photography or sharing requires instructor approval unless required by approved accessibility accommodations. Obtain consent from those recorded or photographed, including during site visits, and keep client and project information confidential.

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Week	Stage	Focus
1	Individual pitches *Creative concepts*	Case study [Tyler Mitchell and Jimmy Chin]. Creative pitch, the purpose, audience and persuasive narrative.
2		Case study [Es Devlin, Turning ideas into art] Adapt for specialist and non-specialist audiences. Apply 4MAT reasons, explanations, demonstrations and future implications. Refine register, terminology, collocations.
3		Case study [David Carson, Working with clients] Deliver and analyze a creative idea pitch. Use stress, rhythm, intonation, purposefully. Handle interruptions and explain revisions from feedback.
4	***Project simulation kick-off***	Case study [Will Wright] and game-pitching examples. Launch the team project, clarify the client brief, rotate roles and plan evidence gathering.
5	Pair pitching *Game concepts*	Case study [Double Fine's Amnesia Fortnight pitches] Explain game concepts and technical choices. Use a site visit and/or client consultation to identify audience needs. Reverse-pitch a client-needs brief and explain specialized terms.
6		Case study [Caldera Interactive, The Rabbit Haul pitch] Respond to changing client requests. Negotiate scope, clarify ambiguity, compare options and justify trade-offs using tactful disagreement and paraphrasing under time limits. (mid-term pitch rubric is issued)
7	Reading break	No classes. Family Day is February 15, SFU reading break is February 16-21. Independent review and project work.
8	Group pitching *Stories and characters*	Case study [Margaret Atwood. Character revealed through actions] learn best practices of developing stories and characters. Refine connected speech, narrative structure and team transitions.
9	***Midterm pitch delivery***	Deliver the live midterm project pitch and respond to audience and role-play client questions. Use feedback to identify priorities for the final pitch.
10		Case study [Jon Ingold, Sparkling Dialogue] Practice remote and hybrid pitch delivery, screen sharing, turn-taking and online audience engagement. Adapt technical explanations in real time. (rubric is issued)
11		Strengthen the project argument through evidence and story. Evaluate competing ideas, qualify uncertain claims and justify revisions. Integrate client feedback, visual evidence and appropriate source acknowledgement.
12		Rehearse the integrated team pitch. Manage objections, competing client priorities and unexpected questions. Refine fluency, prosody and non-verbal delivery.
13	***Final pitch delivery***	Deliver the live team pitch to an audience and role-play client, answer unscripted questions.
14	Course synthesis	Reflect on project outcomes, progress and set priorities for transferring advanced communication skills to MDM study and professional practice.

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Assessments and grading

Assessment of linguistic precision, argument, independent preparation and spontaneous interaction. Each student receives individual grades.

Component	Weight	What is assessed
Participation, attendance and professionalism	15%	Attendance, participation, formative task completion, use of feedback and professionalism. Devices should be limited to class activities.
Project development and teamwork	35%	Individual grades will reflect contribution, quality, collaboration, project management, initiative and self-organization, supported by project evidence and instructor, self, peer and client feedback. (see breakdown below)
Midterm project pitch	25%	Week 9 live pitch and Q&A, graded individually on task achievement, argument, language, coherence, fluency, delivery, visuals and audience adaptation. Feedback should guide revision.
Final project pitch	25%	Week 13 live team pitch and Q&A, graded individually using the same criteria, with independent revision, stronger arguments and supported responses.
Total	100%	

Project development and teamwork grade breakdown

The instructor determines each grade from documented contributions and observed practice, supported by student, peers and client feedback.

Criterion	Weight	What you need to demonstrate
Contribution and solution quality	10%	Complete assigned tasks and produce well-supported work of appropriate quality. Contribute clear explanations, credible evidence and revisions that strengthen the proposed solution.
Collaboration	10%	Communicate respectfully, listen, contribute to shared decisions and manage disagreements constructively. Adapt explanations, negotiate client requests and support coherent team delivery.
Time and project management	5%	Attend team meetings, complete work on time and plan research, rehearsal and revision so that the team can meet project milestones.
Initiative and self-organization	10%	Stay organized, take initiative, communicate progress and respond to changing needs. Identify recurring language or delivery problems and apply feedback independently.
Total for this component	**35%**	These criteria assess the project process and individual contribution. Live pitch performance is assessed separately through the midterm and final pitch components.

Grading profile

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

AI use course policies

This course is designed around the communication needs of MDM students and professional practice. Original teaching materials are created and owned by the instructor. AI will assist with minor editing work and slide and document design. The instructor reviews all materials and remains responsible for content, feedback and grading. AI output may contain inaccuracies or bias, therefore AI detectors will not be used for grading or misconduct decisions.

Student AI use will be task-specific and follows the instructor's directions and SFU guidance. Students must disclose the tool, purpose and extent of permitted use, retain relevant records, verify output and demonstrate their own reasoning and communication in assessed speaking. They remain responsible for submitted work. Undisclosed or unauthorized use may violate SFU's Academic Integrity Policy. Identifiable instructor or student information, confidential client or project materials must not be entered in public AI tools. Institutional use of student work must meet SFU approval, privacy and consent requirements. Equivalent alternatives are available, and paid AI accounts are not required. Further information is available from the SFU Centre for Educational Excellence.

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 supports students with disabilities in achieving their educational goals. Students requiring disability-related accommodations should contact CAL and discuss approved arrangements with the instructor.

Academic integrity

The SFU Academic Integrity website explains academic dishonesty, available support and disciplinary procedures. Students must acknowledge sources, distinguish their own contributions from those of others and represent evidence accurately. The same expectations apply to slides, spoken pitches, visuals and project materials. Fabricated references, misrepresented contributions and unauthorized assistance may violate academic integrity requirements.

Inappropriate use of technology in coursework

Use digital tools in accordance with assignment instructions and the AI requirements above. Those requirements also cover generative AI features embedded in editing, translation and design tools. Obtain authorization before recording, photographing or sharing course content, and protect personal, client and project information. Approved accessibility accommodations take precedence where applicable.

Graduate Studies notes

Important dates and deadlines for graduate students are available from SFU Graduate Studies. Students are responsible for monitoring course announcements and confirmed project and pitch dates.