

***Disclaimer:** This is a sample course outline and is subject to change. Official course outlines will vary depending on delivery format and instructor*

Territory Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect the lək̓ʷəŋən peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

DIGM440: Content Marketing Creation and Strategy

Course Description

This course offers an in-depth exploration of content marketing strategy, focusing on how to plan, manage, and evaluate content that supports business goals and builds meaningful connections with target audiences. You'll examine the full content marketing process, from audience research and strategic planning to distribution and performance analysis, with an emphasis on making informed decisions about content formats, channels, and messaging, supported by tools such as editorial calendars, personas, and key performance indicators. You'll also consider how ethics, accessibility, and emerging tools like AI influence content strategies and shape audience trust.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Analyze the needs of target audiences through audience research to inform strategic content planning and business decision-making.
- Develop content recommendations that are engaging, optimized, and platform-appropriate for social media, email, and websites, to effectively drive audience engagement and meet business objectives.
- Apply SEO, formatting, and structure best practices to make online content discoverable and readable.
- Distribute content effectively, using a strategic mix of owned, earned, and paid channels.
- Evaluate content effectiveness using performance metrics and data, to make informed, strategic improvements.
- Apply ethical principles and compliance guidelines in content planning and distribution, including considerations for artificial intelligence use.

Resources

The learning materials for this course include a curated selection of open educational resources (OER), along with relevant blogs, articles, and videos.

Weekly Schedule

Week	Topics	Readings and Assignments
Week 1	Foundations of Content Marketing	Reading: What is Content Marketing? (Content Marketing Institute) Activity 1.2: Participate in the Spot the Difference discussion
Week 2	Understanding Your Audience	Reading: What is audience development and why savvy marketers care (MarTech) Activity 2.1: Participate in the Audience Observations discussion Complete and submit Assignment 1 Why I Clicked.
Week 3	Developing a Content Strategy	Activity 3.1: Participate in the Content Strategy Breakdown activity Begin working on Assignment 5 Digital Content Strategy (due on the last day of the term)
Week 4	Editorial Planning and Workflow	Reading: Editorial Calendar vs Content Strategy (Foundation Inc) Activity 4.1: Participate in the Planning for Reality discussion
Week 5	Writing for the Web	Reading: How to Write the Perfect Blog Post (Marketing Insider Group) Complete Assignment 2 Deconstruct This Post
Week 6	Storytelling and Brand Voice	Readings: 5 Steps to Find Your Brand Voice (Content Marketing Institute) and 12 Top Storytelling Marketing Examples (Attest) Activity 6.1: Participate in the Voice Check discussion
Week 7	Visual and Multimedia Content	Reading: Visual Content Marketing 101 Complete Assignment 3 Screenshot Audit
Week 8	Social Media Content	Reading: The Psychology of Why We Share Activity 8.1: Participate in the Platform Breakdown discussion
Week 9	Email Marketing and Lead Nurturing	Readings: 21 Highly Effective Email Testing Ideas for Your A/B Strategy and How to Design Eye-Catching Marketing Emails Complete Assignment 4 Inbox Reverse Engineering Continue working on Assignment 5
Week 10	Promotion and Distribution Channels	Reading: The Ultimate Guide to Content Distribution Activity 10.1: Participate in the Distribution Strategy discussion
Week 11	Analytics and Optimization	Reading: A Practical Guide to Content Marketing Metrics (Digital Marketing Institute) Activity 11.1: Participate in the Performance Check discussion
Week 12	Ethics, Accessibility, and Emerging Tech	Readings: With Great Content Power Comes Great Responsibility (Content Marketing Institute) and Building Trust in the AI Era (Search Engine Journal)
Week 13		Complete Assignment 5 Digital Content Strategy

Assignments & Evaluation

Assignment	Description of Assignment	Weight
Assignment 1 Why I Clicked	This assignment asks you to reflect on a real piece of content that captured your attention and analyze what made it effective. By examining content you've interacted with, you'll deepen your understanding of how format, platform, messaging, and audience targeting contribute to strategic goals. The aim is to strengthen your ability to critically assess content and apply those insights to your own content marketing decisions.	15%
Assignment 2 Deconstruct This Post	This assignment helps you practice recognizing what makes online writing effective. By breaking down the written content, you'll apply principles like clarity, structure, and SEO before you start creating content yourself. The goal is to sharpen your eye for what works (and what doesn't!) in digital writing.	15%
Assignment 3 Screenshot Audit	This assignment gives you a chance to step back and reflect on content you've already created... what worked, what didn't, and why. By analyzing your own posts or photos, you'll start to build the critical eye needed to make better design choices that support message and audience.	15%
Assignment 4 Inbox Reverse Engineering	This assignment is about building your instincts as both a reader and content creator. It gives you a chance to break down a real email you've received to see what works, what doesn't, and how small choices in structure, copy, and design affect the overall impact.	15%
Assignment 5 Digital Content Strategy + Ethics Reflection	This assignment is your opportunity to synthesize everything you've learned in the course into a cohesive, values-driven content marketing strategy. You will demonstrate your ability to design a practical editorial plan that aligns with a defined audience and business objectives, while also articulating the ethical principles, accessibility considerations, and stance on AI that guided your decisions	25%
Participation		15%

Usage of GenAI

Please be advised that in this course you are **not authorized** to use any form of generative AI. In order to successfully complete course activities, **generative AI is not required nor welcomed**. Students should not make any use of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, among others that use AI for content generation and editing. As the University of Victoria states in its Academic Integrity Policy "Academic integrity requires commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility." Therefore, I expect you to comply with the course syllabus and I encourage you to enhance your academic experience in this course by refraining from using generative AI.

Attendance Requirements

The course emphasizes **active engagement, collaborative teamwork, and hands-on learning**. Attendance is crucial and considered mandatory for all participants for all sessions (full 3 hours) of the course. Please inform your instructor in advance if you're unable to attend any class sessions. Please note that missing more than one session (3 hours) requires a valid and sufficient reason for absence with verifiable circumstances that substantially prevent your attendance. Your commitment to active participation significantly contributes to your learning experience in this course.

Participation Expectations

- Instructors will track attendance and participation throughout the term. Students who do not attend class may be assigned an "N" grade for the course. Attendance will be taken within the first 15 minutes of class and may be taken later as a second check.
- **If you arrive later than 15 minutes, the door will be closed. Please wait until breaktime to enter the class.**
- Instructors can assign a **final grade of N or refuse** a student to **write a final exam, final assignment, or any assignment that follows multiple absences** or misconduct **if a learner has failed to meet the course's minimum attendance requirements** as identified above. They may also refuse admission to a lecture, learning activity, assignment, or exam because of lateness, misconduct, inattention, or failure to meet the responsibilities of the course noted in this outline.
- The instructor reserves the right to not grade assignments submitted by students who have not maintained regular attendance and participation, and a zero grade being assessed for non-submission.
- Missing **more than one session (3 hours)** requires a valid and sufficient reason for absence.
- Arrive on time and remain for the full session; leaving without permission will be marked **absent**. Please note that work schedule conflicts as well as car, bus, carpooling, or ferry delays are generally not accepted as sufficient reasons for absence beyond the one-session limit.
- Students are expected to actively interact with **course materials, peers, and instructors**, including contributing to discussions and teamwork.
- Students are expected to complete assignments and assessments on time and submit work by the due date.
- **Technology use** (cell phones, tablets, laptops, smart glasses/ watches) must be limited to course-related activities only.
- Participation includes respectful active listening, not just talking.
- This course is delivered in a collaborative, discussion-based learning environment. Students are expected to demonstrate respectful and attentive behaviour at all times.
- University policy allows an instructor to refuse a student admission to class because of lateness, misconduct, disruptive behaviour, inattention, or failure to meet the responsibilities of the course.
- It is students' responsibility to be familiar with the criteria in which they are being assessed for this course. Please refer to the specific information under each assessment.

Group Participation Expectations

- Active participation in group work and meetings is required. Students who fail to attend or contribute to group work may be removed from their group, at the instructor's discretion, and deemed ineligible to participate in or receive marks for the group project, including the group presentation.

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