Comm 5665 Fall 2016

Sci Comm Practicum: Developing Science Communication Tools

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In science and technology fields, the ability to translate complex issues into compelling messages is an increasingly important career skill. Graduate students in STEM fields, especially, need practice developing user-friendly content to convey information to multiple audiences, including policymakers, newsmakers and the voting public. Effective communication requires knowledge of information dissemination, audience response, quality writing and presentation. In this course, science and technology students will receive hands-on practice developing several critical forms of information communication for non-scientists. Students will receive individualized attention, critique and editorial support. We will cover creating an effective press release, writing for the Internet, using visual information and short-form slide presentation. We will address communicating about socially and politically sensitive issues.

Students will use their own research – or research in their field -- for all assignments. This 1-credit weekend workshop has significant out-of-class work, including readings and video viewing prior to the workshop, a one-on-one editorial review session and a revision of a class assignment after the session. This will allow students time to digest edits and comments by instructors and rewrite the material.

Individual meetings will be set up with students in the weeks immediately following the class to go over the content and revised assignment. Course readings and content will be adjusted depending on class needs. The course will be one of the four workshops in a new certificate program for cancer communication.

This course is designed to complement Comm 5660, a weekend workshop where students are introduced to the concepts of science communication, with minimal time for hands-on practice. This course complements 5660 by putting theory into practice.

Course Outcomes:

Outcome 1: Students will learn to present complex information -- their own research -- with clear and compelling writing, data visualization and other forms of communication utilizing new and traditional media formats.

Outcome 2: Students will have a grounding in prominent theories of science communication that attempt to explain cultural and individual variation in how audiences absorb and respond to science-based information. They will synthesize knowledge and apply to developing communication– written and oral -- relevant to students' own research, or discipline.

Students will understand the complexities of communicating to non-science audiences, including general public and policy makers.

Outcome 3: Students will develop knowledge of ,and practice with, narrative forms of science communication.

Outcome 4: Students will practice and improve oral presentation skills and learn how to connect with diverse audiences.

Time: Friday April 8 3-6 p.m. Saturday, April 9 10-4, Sunday April 10, 10-3

Professor Lauren Chambliss elc55@cornell.edu, 255-7344; Guest Instructor Nathan Seppa, Biomedical journalist, Science News

Assignments: Students will be expected to watch all videos, read book chapters and literature IN ADVANCE of the weekend course.

Students must bring laptops to class or tablet to class. Smart phones are not acceptable.

Friday Evening 3-6 Introduction to class**:** Expectations. Outline of work. Class introductions. Students will interview each other and write a quick news story about person next to them, and introduce them through the story. Discussion of fundamentals: Know your audience: levels of sophistication; Establishing communication goal: inform/educate, persuade, inspire action or behavioral change	Come to class with your topic choice and basic background info Bring message triangle from Comm 5660 if available. Matt Nisbet Video from Arthur M. Sackler Colloquia, 2013. *http://www.youtube.com/user/sacklercolloquia?feature=results_m* Melissa Marshall*, Talk Nerdy to Me* *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y66YKWz_sf0* Dan Kahan, *What is Science Communication?* Journal of Science Communication, 14 (03) 2015

Saturday 10-4 Science Communication 101 Word choice, brevity, prioritizing information **Getting started**: Constructing a lead; how to identify the interesting elements and communicate them Difference between academic leads – abstract – and general public **Practicum**: Practice writing leads from science articles BREAK **Press Release:** Crafting an effective press release about complex material. When to do it, how to make it work? (Web and print application) LUNCH **Practicum:** Write a press release **f**rom your own research BREAK Peer Review of press release	Chris Mooney, *The Science of Why We Don't Believe Science,* Mother Jones, May 2011 Fiske, Susan, (2006) *Universal dimension of social cognition: warmth and competence*, Trends in Cognitive Sciences Vol 11. No. 2 Fiske, Susan, (2013) *Motivated Audiences Beliefs and Attitude Formation* Video from Arthur M. Sackler Colloquia, 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oep_8xERnig&index=3&list=PLGJm1x3XQeK0PoWcUGGJzmA_GepNz4Ehf Moser, Susanne, (2013) *Getting Real About It: Meeting the psychological and social demands of a world in distress.* Sage Reference Handbook of Environmental Leadership
Sunday 10-4 **Review**: Press release rundown **Storytelling in Science Communication**: Using narrative; facts and data illustration; reason vs. emotion BREAK **Practicum:** Presentation skills: Connecting to your audience Create a short-form presentation LUNCH **Presentation Competition**: Deliver Power Point with instructor, peer and community member feedback.	Broussard, Dominique, (2013) *New Media Landscapes and the science information consumer*, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences Dahlstrom, Michael, *Narratives in Science Communication* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=027G3_cAnv0 Additional readings appropriate to communication about sensitive medical issues, especially cancer.

After class: Revise press release and send within one week of class. Meet professor or guest lecture (via skype) to go over class content and identify strengths and weaknesses in communication.	

Cornell Code: By now you should know the University's Code of Academic Integrity. If not, you should familiarize yourself with the code. (http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html).

The key guidelines are:
1. A student shall in no way misrepresent his or her work.
2. A student shall in no way fraudulently or unfairly advance his or her academic position.
3. A student shall not be party to another student's failure to maintain academic integrity.
4. A student shall not in any other manner violate the principle of academic integrity.

Class Code: For the purposes of this course, **accuracy and attribution** are taken very seriously. You will be reviewing and researching many sources, papers and articles for your project. Do not use facts, figures, data or interpretation without attribution, even if you have re-written some content so that it is not verbatim. If you are using someone else's material, attribute it. If you have any questions about this, please talk to me.

If you violate university or class code, you may be assessed severe penalties. Please take the time to review the above. If you have any questions about whether something falls under the university code, or about any other aspect of class expectations, please feel free to ask.

Grading: The focus of the class is project based. You are expected to do readings and view videos that are listed as homework prior to each class and to participate fully in discussions and class activities. Please be on time for class. All readings will be posted on Blackboard the two weeks before the class to give you time to prepare.

75% projects
25% participation in class discussions, including preparedness for class

Disabilities
Cornell University is committed to full inclusion in education for all persons. Services and reasonable accommodations are available to persons with temporary and permanent disabilities. The Office of Student Disability Services (http://www.clt.cornell.edu/campus/sds/index.html) determines the eligibility of students to receive formal accommodations and works collaboratively with the student and university faculty and staff to recommend appropriate accommodations. Please visit the Student Disabilities Services site for more information about accessibility at Cornell.