Comm 5660
Science Communication Workshop
Spring 2018

DATES: Friday, 1 March 2019 – Sunday, 3 March 2019
[Last update: 25 February 2019]

This intensive weekend workshop introduces graduate students and post-docs in the sciences (including natural sciences, engineering, experimental social sciences, etc.) to communicating effectively – especially about controversial topics, such as climate change or evolution – with nonscientists such as policy makers, political stakeholders, the media, and the general public. Activities include role-playing, mini-lectures, hands-on practice writing blog posts and other outreach materials, real-time practice being interviewed for the media, and discussion with invited speakers.

We will begin on Friday afternoon with a panel of speakers talking about opportunities in public communication. After the panel, we’ll have pizza and veggies for more informal discussion with the panelists.

On Saturday, we start right out with writing for the public through press releases and blogs. You’ll get practice. Plenty of practice. Sunday is devoted to constructing a message and delivering it in a broadcast media interview. Throughout the weekend we’ll also meet other scientists and science communicators, learning from their experience.

This course is supported by the Department of Communication and the Cornell BEST Program.

Course website
http://blogs.cornell.edu/scicommworkshop/

Instructor
Professor Bruce Lewenstein
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Office hours: Thursdays, 1:00-3:00
 and happily by appointment

Class location
Plant Science 143
Assignments and grades
You will write your own press release or blog post on the first day of the workshop, and you will both conduct and be the subject of a video interview on the second day.

IN ADVANCE OF THE COURSE:
Come with a brief (100-200 word) written summary of your own research. You will use this summary as the basis for class activities. If you are interested in science blogging, set up your own blog site in advance (Google’s Blogger service, http://www.blogger.com/home, is pretty simple to use, but you’re welcome to try another service if you prefer).

You will need a computer or tablet (probably with a keyboard), as you will be looking at things online and writing during the workshop.

Schedule

Friday, 1 March
4:30 pm Panel: Opportunities for public communication of science
- Ellen George, PhD student, Natural Resources, and active producer of social media for both research and outreach purposes. See @greatlakescisco on Twitter!
- Stephanie Hamilton, PhD student in Physics at University of Michigan, contributor to astrobites, workshop coordinator at UM’s RELATE science communication and community engagement project. More at https://stephaniejhamilton.com/.
- Cindy Leifer, Associate Professor of Immunology, Department of Microbiology & Immunology (https://www.leiferlab.com/). Co-host of “Immune” podcast (http://www.microbe.tv/immune/)
- Tom Seeley, Horace White Professor in Biology, Department of Neurobiology and Behavior. Author of Honeybee Democracy (2010) and other books. (http://pages.nbb.cornell.edu/seeley.shtml).

6:00 pm Pizza & veggies, informal discussion

Saturday, 22 September
9:00 am The basics of writing science for the public
10:30 am Break
10:45 am Developing and writing your own stories
12:00 pm Lunch (on your own)
1:00 pm  Guest lecture:
Carlyn Buckler, Associate Professor of Practice
School of Integrative Plant Sciences.
Focuses on science communication outreach, international food security,
and digital technologies From 2006, a summary of her background and interests:

2:00 pm  Break

2:15 pm  Writing for social media
More time actually writing, sharing ideas and drafts, getting comments
from colleagues, etc.

3:45 pm  Break

4:00 pm  The science of science communication

5:00 pm  End of (organized) day

8:00 pm  REVISED PRESS RELEASES/BLOGS DUE

**Sunday, 23 March**

9:00 am  Critique of press releases/blog postings

9:30 am  Rewriting, brainstorming, using images

10:45 am  Break

11:00 am  Developing and delivering media messages
Hands-on practical instruction and practice about developing messages
Linda Glaser, writer/publicist, Cornell College of Arts & Sciences

12:00 pm  Lunch (on your own)

1:00 pm  Being interviewed
Hands-on practical instruction and practice in being interviewed
on camera

3:00 pm  Break

3:30 pm  What does it all mean? The science communication system

4:30 pm  Graduation (not really – this is what time we’ll end!)
Resources
This list will be posted on the class website and periodically updated

Books

“How to” Websites
http://www.aaas.org/communicatingscience (produced by American Association for the Advancement of Science, includes webinars, tip-sheets, etc.)
http://sites.agu.org/sharingscience/inform-news/ (tips from the American Geophysical Union)
http://www.wfsj.org/course/en/index.html (online science journalism course, developed by World Federation of Science Journalists; primary audience is science journalists in developing countries)
http://www.scidev.net/en/science-communication/ (SciDev.net’s “Communicating Science” section, focused on science journalism for the developing world, but relevant for anyone communicating science; see especially the "practical guides" section)
Science Literacy Project (a workshop, currently inactive, for science reporters working in public radio; some resources online, especially the “tip sheets”)
http://www.theopennotebook.com/ (a blog with comments and interviews from science writers about many aspects of how they report, write, and think about their stories and their lives as writers; see especially the section on “Getting Started” -- https://www.theopennotebook.com/getting-started-in-science-journalism/)

Social media discussion ABOUT science communication
Twitter: #scicomm, #gradscicomm

Science outreach websites (the “informal science education” community)
http://www.informalscience.org/ (a resource and online community for informal learning projects, research and evaluation; it provides access to a wide range of material)

Science news commentary (perhaps a dying category?)
http://undark.org/ (from MIT’s Knight Science Journalism project, a variety of stories probing science journalism)
http://www.cjr.org/the_observatory/ (published from the late 2000s until 2015, “a lens on the science press” from the Columbia Journalism Review)
http://www.badscience.net/ (from the UK, a scientist commented regularly on media coverage of science; seems to have ended at end of 2017)
https://www.syfy.com/tags/bad-astronomy (a long-running blog on…bad astronomy! Actually, mostly good astronomy, and sometimes comments on media coverage.)

Science news sites (just a few of the many, many possibilities…I’m not even sure this list is worth providing…let’s talk about that!)
New York Times (http://www.nytimes.com/pages/science/), especially the Tuesday "Science Times" section (you will need to register, but there is no cost)
Yahoo! News’s “Science” category (http://news.yahoo.com/science/)
The Why Files (http://whyfiles.org/), RIP. An online science magazine published 1996-2017
Livescience.com (http://livescience.com)
Slate’s “Science” section – which, since 2018, is a subset of its “Technology” section. Exam question: Shall we talk about why? (https://slate.com/technology/science)
SciDev.net (a site specifically for science journalists in the developing world, but with relevance for anyone trying to communicate science), http://www.scidev.net

Science blogs [is this still a useful category? In last 2 years, I’ve deleted most of the directories and collections that used to be here!]
http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/ (used to house many prominent blogs, still has a few, but active site for science updates)
http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/ (used to house prominent blogs, now an active site for science updates)
http://www.researchblogging.org/ (an interesting question about who this is for…. And doesn’t seem to have been updated since 2017)
…and many more available through http://scienceseeker.org/

Science story ideas/press releases
http://www.eurekalert.org/ (Basic source for science press releases)
http://www.alphagalileo.org/ (A European counterpart to EurekAlert!)
http://www.newswise.com/articles/list?category=science (An independent alternative to EurekAlert! – site also has many topics besides science)
http://www.sciencedaily.com/ (Another independent alternative to EurekAlert!)

Other sites to explore
http://www.pcst.co/, International Network on Public Communication of Science and Technology
http://www.nps.gov/hfc/services/evaluation/, Media Evaluation and Visitor Research site, maintained by National Park Service
http://www.nscalliance.org/, Natural Science Collections Alliance, a support organization for natural science collections (including museums and their staffs)
http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/, Science Magazine’s careers page, which includes many stories about communication and outreach options
http://www.nature.com/naturejobs/career-toolkit/index.html, Nature’s equivalent to Science’s careers page
http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/intersection/2009/04/09/policy-fellowships-for-scientists-engineers/, a list of science policy fellowships (from 2009 – is it still a useful place to start?)
http://www.citizenscience.org/, home of the Citizen Science Association

Organizations you might want to join
Many of the following organizations have extremely useful resources on their websites – guidelines, ethical codes, handbooks, etc., often available at no charge and without the need to join.
http://www.amwa.org/, American Medical Writers Association
http://www.publicgardens.org/, American Public Gardens Association
http://www.healthjournalism.org/, Association of Health Care Journalists
http://www.astc.org/, Association of Science-Technology Centers
http://www.aza.org/, Association of Zoos and Aquariums
http://www.councilscienceeditors.org/, Council of Science Editors
http://www.nasw.org, National Association of Science Writers
http://naaee.org/, North American Association for Environmental Education
http://www.sej.org, Society of Environmental Journalists
….and there are many others