



## SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will focus on developing best practices for communicating science to a non-science audience. We will undertake this in a variety of contexts from shorter sound bytes to a larger public event, and many levels in between. Exercises will use scientific cases for debate and discussions. Activities will include improvisational techniques to get you more comfortable in speaking in front of people and help you develop your ability to think on your feet. You will develop your personal voice and goals for your science communication and hone your ability to craft and tell an engaging story. Be prepared to communicate and interact!

### COURSE PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of this course is to get you thinking and practicing the art of communication of science to the *non-scientist*. Of course, scientists need to talk to other scientists, but I feel like those skills are emphasized in a number of classes offered. A lot of the concepts we discuss can also be applied widely to any type of communication. As science becomes more specialized and politicised, I feel that it is more and more critical to play a role in helping others understand why science is important to their lives.

### COURSE GOALS

During this course you will:

- Consider the impact of science communication on different populations of non-experts
- Learn about the many different venues of science communication, from graphic novels to videos and social media
- Develop analogies and create a variety of concise statements that describe a research project (yours or one of your choosing)
- Practice storytelling and ways of connecting with the public
- Learn improvisation and get more comfortable speaking in front of people
- Engage in weekly readings and discussions
- Develop a presentation about your chosen research/topic

## APPROXIMATE SCHEDULE FOR THE COURSE

Week	Topic(s)
1	Introductions; Why do improv?
2	Models of scicomm and setting goals
3	Audience considerations
4	Messaging and explaining 'so what'
5	Choosing context and language
6	Storytelling and analogies
7	Brainstorming content
8	Putting the pieces together
9	Using visuals and presentation style
10	Practice Presentations and peer review
11	Presentation modifications and debrief

## GRADE BREAKDOWN

This course builds towards a project or presentation about science research for a general audience. To get there, we will practice many elements of good communication and will work hard at structuring the projects. Attendance and participation are critical components of the skills taught in this class.

- 30% short written assignments, some based on readings/activities
- 20% participation in class activities (improvisation, discussions, stories, etc.)
- 20% initial submission of project/presentation
- 10% peer evaluations of other projects
- 20% final project (judged by quality and effort)

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All work created for this course must be original and produced for this course in large proportion, unless otherwise discussed. If you have a similar previous project, you can use it as a basis, but must create an original piece for this course. You are responsible for knowing the rules from Senate that pertain to academic and non-academic misconduct. If you use someone else's work in ANY way, you must acknowledge their authorship.

## IMPORTANT DATES

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due by 5 pm on the due date, with a 24 hour grace period with no penalty. After that window, no late assignments will be accepted.

- Jan. 28: Assignment 1 (5% of final mark)- Introduction to you and your goals
- Feb 11: Assignment 2 (5% of final mark) - Addressing your audience
- Feb 18: Assignment 3 (7.5% of final mark)- The message box
- Mar 11: Assignment 4 (12.5% of final mark)- Mockup/storyboard
- Mar 24: Initial submission of final project (20% of final mark)
- March 28 and 30: In class presentations and peer reviews (20% of final mark)
- April 1: Peer reviews due (10% of final mark)
- April 4: Final presentations (20% of final mark)
- For further details, see the Blackboard site entry for each assignment

## CONTACT ME

Email me at [kpoling@uwindsor.ca](mailto:kpoling@uwindsor.ca) to get in touch and set up an appointment.