



Cornell University

Comm 5660

Science Communication Workshop

Fall 2016

DATES: Friday, 11 November – Sunday, 13 November

[Last update: 7 November 2016]

This intensive weekend workshop trains graduate students and post-docs in the sciences (including natural sciences, engineering, experimental social sciences, etc.) to communicate effectively – especially about controversial topics, such as climate change -- with nonscientists such as policy makers, political stakeholders, the media, and the general public. Activities include role-playing, mini-lectures, hands-on practice writing press releases 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](#), the [Cornell BEST Program](#), and an Engaged Cornell grant in collaboration with the Department of Biomedical Sciences [Comparative Cancer Biology Program](#).

Course website

<http://blogs.cornell.edu/scicommworkshop/>

Instructor

Professor Bruce Lewenstein

303 Morrill Hall

607-255-8310 (office)

b.lewenstein@cornell.edu (e-mail)

Office hours: Wednesdays, 1:00-3:00

and happily by appointment

Class location

Warren 150

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, 11 November

- 4:30 pm Panel: *Opportunities for public communication of science*
Linda Rayor, Entomology, founder of Insectapalooza
Merry Buckley, Communications Manager,
Baker Institute for Animal Health
Cynthia Leifer, Cornell Vet School, participant in "Public Voices" project
Maureen Bickley, Museum Education Manager, Museum of the Earth
- 6:00 pm Pizza & veggies, informal discussion

Saturday, 12 November

- 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 The world of science blogging, tweeting, and other online forms
- 2:00 pm Break
- 2:15 pm Writing. More time actually writing, sharing ideas and drafts, getting comments from colleagues, etc.
- 3:45 pm Break
- 4:00 pm Writing op-eds
Cynthia Leifer

5:00 pm End of (organized) day

8:00 pm REVISED PRESS RELEASES/BLOGS DUE

Sunday, 13 November

9:00 am Critique of press releases/blog postings

10:15 am Break

10:30 am Developing and delivering media messages
Hands-on practical instruction and practice about developing messages

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

- Baron, Nancy. (2010). *Escape from the Ivory Tower: A Guide to Making Your Science Matter*. Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Bowater, Laura & Yeoman, Kay. (2013). *Science Communication: A Practical Guide for Scientists*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell
- Blum, Deborah, Knudson, Mary, & Henig, Robin Marantz (Eds.). (2006). *A Field Guide to Science Writing: The Official Guide of the National Association of Science Writers* (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dean, Cornelia. (2009). *Am I Making Myself Clear? A Scientist's Guide to Talking to the Public*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Hayes, Richard, & Grossman, Daniel. (2006). *A Scientist's Guide to Talking with the Media*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Menninger, Holly, & Gropp, Robert. (2008). *Communicating Science: A Primer for Working with the Media*. Washington, DC: American Institute for Biological Sciences.
- Meredith, Dennis. (2010). *Explaining Research: How to Reach Key Audiences to Advance Your Work*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Olson, Randy. (2009). *Don't be such a scientist: talking substance in an age of style*. Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Olson, Randy. (2015). *Houston, We Have a Narrative*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

"How to" Websites

- <http://www.explainingresearch.com/> (produced by longtime science writer Dennis Meredith to accompany his book, *Explaining Research*)
- <http://www.aaas.org/communicatingscience> (produced by American Association for the Advancement of Science, includes webinars, tipsheets, 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)
- [Tips for great \(science\) media interviews](#) (from Patricia Thomas, Knight Chair in Health & Medical Journalism, Grady College of Journalism & Mass Communication, University of Georgia)
- [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)

Social media discussion ABOUT science communication

Twitter: [#scicomm](#), [#gradscicomm](#)

The #SciComm Daily, <http://paper.li/ThilinaH/1335399008#>

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

<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 comments regularly)

http://www.slate.com/blogs/bad_astronomy.html (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)

Google News’s “Sci/Tech” category (<http://news.google.com/nwshp?tab=wn&topic=t>)

Yahoo! News’s “Science” category (<http://news.yahoo.com/science/>)

The Why Files (<http://whyfiles.org/>), RIP. An online science magazine published 1996-2016

Livescience.com (<http://livescience.com>)

Slate’s “Health and Science” section (http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science.html)

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

<http://scienceblogs.com> (one of the main sites for science-focused blogs)

<http://phenomena.nationalgeographic.com/> (some of the most prominent blogs; in the process of moving to a new structure, so may be hard to navigate)

<http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/> (still more prominent blogs)

<http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/> (still more prominent blogs)

<http://www.wired.com/category/science-blogs/> (not quite as prominent, but still pretty well known)

<http://www.researchblogging.org/> (an interesting question about who this is for....)

...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 (outdated, but still a useful place to start)

<http://www.citizen science.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