Comm 5660
Science Communication Workshop
Spring 2014
DATES: Friday, 28 Feb 2014 – Sunday, 2 March 2014

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 start with a panel discussion on Friday afternoon. Saturday, you’ll be introduced to 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.

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

Instructor
Professor Bruce Lewenstein,
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Office hours: Wednesdays, 11:15-1:00 and happily by appointment

Location
Kennedy 213

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:
First, 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).
Schedule

Friday, 28 February
4:00 pm  Panel: Perspectives on science communication: Scientists and science writers talk about what they do
Laura Martin, graduate student, Natural Resources
Sonja Skelly, director of education, Cornell Plantations
Steve Strogatz, Jacob Gould Schurman Professor of Applied Mathematics
Liz Wayne, graduate student, Biomedical Engineering

Followed at 6:00 pm by pizza & veggies dinner

Saturday, 1 March
9:00 am  The basics of writing science for the public
Sharon Tregaskis, science writer based in Ithaca

10:00 am  Break

10:15 am  Writing your own press release/blog posting
Bruce Lewenstein

12:00 pm  Lunch (on your own)

1:00 pm  Panel: Communicating from campus
Campus communicators talking about reporting, providing public information, and advocacy:
Sarah Davidson Evanega, Senior Associate Director,
International Programs/CALS
Ellen Leventry, CALS Media Relations

2:00 pm  Writing. More time actually writing, sharing ideas and drafts, getting comments from colleagues, etc.

3:00 pm  Break

3:15 pm  Dealing with controversy
Bruce Lewenstein

4:00 pm  Where does all this fit into science communication system?
Bruce Lewenstein

5:00 pm  End of day
Sunday, 2 March
9:00 am  Critique of press releases/blog postings
        Bruce Lewenstein

10:15 am  Break

10:30 am  Developing and delivering media messages
        Hands-on practical instruction about developing messages and being interviewed on camera
        Staff from University Communications: Lesley Yorke, Melissa Osgood, Claudia Wheatley

12:00 pm  Lunch (on your own)

1:00 pm  Interview practice

3:30 pm  Break

4:00 pm  Dr. Scientist goes to Washington (or Ottawa): Scientist/policy makers
        Roxanne Razavi, graduate student, Biology, Queen’s University (Canada)
        Chris Schaffer, professor, Biomedical Engineering, Cornell

5:00 pm  "Graduation"
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, 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, but with new material scheduled for Fall 2014 – 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 how they write their stories)

Social media discussion ABOUT science communication
Twitter: #scicomm, #gradscicomm, #NASinterface, #scio14
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, especially through the related site of http://www.informalcommons.org/)

Science news commentary
http://ksj.mit.edu/tracker (A team of experienced science journalists reviews the day's news, and also comments on science journalism)
http://www.cjr.org/the_observatory/ (“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 (the current home of a long-running blog on…bad astronomy! Actually, it’s mostly about good astronomy, but sometimes has nice 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/)
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)
http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/ (still more prominent blogs)
http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/ (still more prominent blogs)
http://www.researchblogging.org/ (an interesting question about who this is for….)
…and many more available through http://scienceseeker.org/, a successor to
http://scienceblogging.org/ [on hiatus at this time]

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.pcstacademy.org, International Network on Public Communication of Science and Technology [site is likely to move in Spring 2014]
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); there’s also a list at http://www.science-policy.net/11627.html, but I don’t know when it was last updated
http://www.citizenscience.org/, Citizen Science Central, run by Cornell’s Lab of Ornithology, but covers the whole field

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