Comm 5660
Science Communication Workshop
Spring 2013
DATES: Friday, 1 March 2013 – Sunday, 3 March 2013

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 non-scientists 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: Tuesdays, 12:30-2:30 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).

Next, please read in advance the following articles:


**Schedule**

**Friday, 1 March**

4:00 pm  Panel: Perspectives on science communication

Jon Miller, independent radio producer, Homelands Productions  
Linda Rayor, Senior Research Associate and Senior Lecturer, Entomology, director of Naturalist Outreach program  
Sharon Tregaskis ’95, freelance science journalist (formerly *Cornell Alumni Magazine*)  
Laura Martin, graduate student, Natural Resources, active science writer and blogger  
Alexis Erwin, graduate student, Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, active in Ecological Society of America policy activities

Followed at 6:00 pm by pizza & veggies dinner

**Saturday, 2 March**

9:00 am  The basics of writing science for the public  
Sharon Tregaskis, freelance science journalist

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  
Kathie Hodge, Associate Professor of Mycology, editor and blogificator of Cornell Mushroom Blog (blog.mycology.cornell.edu)  
John McKain, Assistant Dean for Communications, College of Human Ecology

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, 3 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]
         Tracy Vosburgh, University Communications
         Lesley Yorke, University Communications
         Claudia Wheatley, University Communications

12:00 pm  Lunch (on your own)

1:00 pm  Interview practice
         Tracy Vosburgh, Lesley Yorke, and Claudia Wheatley

3:30 pm  Break

4:00 pm  Integrating outreach into your research program:
         John Losey, Associate Professor of Entomology, director of Lost Ladybug Project

5:00 pm  "Graduation"
Resources
This list will be posted on the class website and periodically updated

**Books**

**“How to” Websites**
- [http://communicatingscience.aaas.org/](http://communicatingscience.aaas.org/) (produced by American Association for the Advancement of Science, includes webinars, tipsheets, etc.)
- [http://sites.agu.org/sharingscience/inform-news/](http://sites.agu.org/sharingscience/inform-news/) (tips from the American Geophysical Union)
- [http://www.wfsj.org/course/en/index.html](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/](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/](http://www.theopennotebook.com/) (a blog with comments and interviews from science writers about how they write their stories)

**Science outreach websites (the “informal science education” community)**
- [http://caise.insci.org/](http://caise.insci.org/) (Center for Advancement of Informal Science Education, an NSF-funded coordinating site)
- [http://www.informalscience.org/](http://www.informalscience.org/) (a resource and online community for informal learning projects, research and evaluation; it’s part of a larger community of sites collected at
http://www.informalcommons.org/ (a portal to several online communities and sites dealing with informal learning projects, research, and evaluation; among the sites are http://www.informalscience.org, for practitioners of all kinds, and http://www.exhibitfiles.org/, mainly for the science museum/science center world, relevant to anyone doing science exhibitions)

http://www.nisenet.org/ (the Nanoscale Informal Science Education Network, but relevant to all informal science people)

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

…and of course there are many more, nicely collated at http://scienceblogging.org/

…and how do we think about http://scienceseeker.org/, a successor to scienceblogging.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 (An independent alternative to EurekAlert!)

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
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 page
http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/intersection/2009/04/09/policy-fellowships-for-scientists-engineers/, a list of science policy fellowships (getting slightly dated, but still a useful place to start)
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