Comm 5660  
Science Communication Workshop  
Spring 2015  
DATES: Friday, 27 February – Sunday, 1 March 2015  
[Last update: 17 February 2015]  

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 public lecture from Dan Fagin, an environmental journalist and author of the Pulitzer-Prize winning book *Toms River: A Story of Science and Salvation* (2013). After the lecture, Fagin will join us for a small-group dinner.

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.

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

Instructor  
Professor Bruce Lewenstein  
304 Rockefeller Hall  
255-3810 (telephone)  
b.lewenstein@cornell.edu (e-mail)  
Office hours: Wednesdays, 12:30-2:30 and happily by appointment  

Class location  
Kennedy 213  
[Note: the building should be unlocked; if it’s not, call Bruce’s mobile phone at 607-227-1161]  

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).

Schedule

Friday, 27 February
4:00 pm "Cancer and the Environment: Connecting the Dots in Toms River and Beyond"
   Dan Fagin, Professor of Science & Environmental Journalism, NYU
   Author of the 2014 Pulitzer-Prize winner
   Toms River: A Story of Science and Salvation
   http://danfagin.com/
   Public lecture, Kennedy 213
   Book signing to follow the lecture

6:00 pm Private small-group pizza & salad dinner for class members only with Dan Fagin.
   Location TBA

Saturday, 28 February
9:00 am The basics of writing science for the public
   Bruce Lewenstein

10:30 am Break

10:45 am Developing and writing your own stories
   Sharon Tregaskis, editor-in-chief, annual magazine of Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health
   https://sites.google.com/site/sharontregaskis/Home

12:00 pm Lunch (on your own)

1:00 pm Writing. More time actually writing, sharing ideas and drafts, getting comments from colleagues, etc.

2:30 pm Break

2:45 pm The world of science blogging, tweeting, and other online forms
   • D. N. Lee, postdoctoral associate in Psychology at Cornell, blogger for Scientific American, and active tweeter, http://about.me/DNLee

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

5:00 pm End of (organized) day
8:00 pm REVISED PRESS RELEASES/BLOGS DUE

Sunday, 2 November

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
   (http://universityrelations.cornell.edu/university-communications/)
   Lesley Yorke, Melissa Osgood

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 Albany or Ottawa): Scientist/policy makers
   Joe Regenstein, Professor, Department of Food Science
   Roxanne Razavi, recent Ph.D. from Queens University, Canada

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, #ScioX

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://ksj.mit.edu/tracker (experienced science journalists review the day's news, and also comments on science journalism; currently on hiatus, reinvigoration scheduled for 2015)
http://www.ejr.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 (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/)
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.sciencemag.org/ (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); 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