



Course Outline



School of Biological, Earth and
Environmental Sciences

Faculty of Science
Term 1, 2021

1. Staff

Position	Name	Email
Course convener and instructor	Associate Professor Carol Oliver	carol.oliver@unsw.edu.au

1. Course summary

As a student, and in your future career in the workplace or as a researcher, effective communication is essential. This course seeks to provide science students with the opportunity to gain a solid foundation in necessary science communication skills.

Introduction to Science Communication is a second level science fully online science elective that can also be taken as a general education course. Although designed for science students, most of the course has application in other disciplines. There are no pre-requisites. The course is suited to any student wishing to improve their university and career communication skills.

The skills taught include active listening, reading critically, writing succinctly in the narrative, descriptive, reflective and academic styles. Students learn how to write a stunning essay for science topics to gain higher marks, and how to develop and deliver a compelling presentation for peer and public audiences.

Students also learn how to research science topics, including searching for and evaluating primary literature and in identifying reliable information from non-academic sources on the internet.

Three short exercises and two assignments are learning-oriented and designed for you to practice the key communication skills.

For those students wishing to add a science communicator career option to their science degree, this course is also a foundation for the third level course BEES6800 The Science of Science Communication, which is designed to provide sufficient skills for that purpose.

2 Course learning outcomes

At the end of the successful completion of this course, students should be confident communicators. They will be able to:

1. Improve writing through better reading
2. Write more effectively using narrative, descriptive, reflective and other academic styles of writing
3. Combine and apply the steps to a cohesive and coherent essay on a science topic
4. Research a science topic, storyboard, select visuals, and design effective PowerPoint

slides to create a compelling and coherent presentation

5. Take better notes and utilise more effective listening skills

3. How to be successful in this online course

1. Read this course outline
2. Read '**how this course is organised**' in Week 1
3. Interact with the course on a **regular weekly basis** as with a face-to-face course – data on the course shows that students who do this usually get high marks.
4. Attend four Zoom video conferences (introductory plus three assignment help conferences). Students who attend feel part of a learning community and gain tips for their assignments. Recordings will be made available.
5. Get a notebook and **handwrite notes** or create a mind-map for each week.
6. Complete the weekly self-check quizzes.
7. Take time to **read and interpret** the assignments and the rubrics – students who do this well usually get high marks.
8. Connect with me if you have **any questions** at any point in the course. E-mails are generally responded to from immediately to a few hours. On occasion, this may extend to 12 hours.

4 Graduate attributes developed in this course

Faculty of Science Graduate Attributes	Level of Focus 0 = No Focus 1 = Minimal 2 = Minor 3 = Major	Related Tasks & Assessment
1. Research, inquiry, and analytical thinking abilities.	3	Use of primary literature, critical thinking through evaluation of information, and understanding the uncertain nature of science. Assessment 3 addresses this attribute
2. Capability and motivation for intellectual development.	3	The course is aimed at encouraging lifelong learning. There is no rote learning, no final exam, and all assessments are aimed at higher order thinking to develop skills necessary for lifelong learning. All three assessments address this attribute.

3. Ethical, social and professional understanding.	1	The course contains ethical considerations in communicating science using narrative.
4. Communication.	3	The entire course concerns most forms of communication science through writing and presentation. All three assessments are aimed at improving communication
5. Information literacy.	3	The course requires access to the library and online resources to research science communication literature. Digital literacy is taught in Week 7.

For more information, visit: <https://www.science.unsw.edu.au/our-faculty/science-graduate-attributes>

5 Learning and teaching activities

Lessons – The core content is delivered via short electronic books (e-books) containing text, images and videos fully online. There are no full-length lectures or tutorials but four option class conferences are offered through Teams. Students receive personalised tutoring via e-mail or Teams when requested. *Introduction to Science Communication* is aimed at student providing students with the practical tools to communicate effectively to peer and lay audiences, with a focus on undertaking communication in terms of science. The course includes basic skills such as reading, listening, writing and presenting through practicing those skills in practical short course questions and two practical assignments. There is no final exam.

6 Assessments

Assessment 1: One assignment broken up into three small parts for a total 20% of the course mark. These parts are designed to give students communication practice and to provide rapid early feedback on their progress.

Assessment 2: In Part A create a storyboard for a video presentation exploring the use of narrative in science communication. In Part B, create a slide presentation with voiceover using the storyboard and

feedback from Part A to create a PowerPoint video presentation of up to 3 minutes and uploaded to YouTube as an **unlisted** video. (Part A = 20%; Part B = 20%; total for Assignment 2 = 40% of the course mark)

Assessment 3: A 1,500-word argumentative essay on a current science topic of your choice to test plain-English essay writing skills written to engage a non-expert public audience (40% of course mark)

Course schedule

Week number	Topics	What is due
<p>Week 1 Module</p> <p>To do this week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the e-book and take notes • Watch the videos and take notes • Reflect on the e-book content • Undertake question 1 	<p>Ground rules for improving your communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three guiding principles of science communication • A practical guide to critical thinking • Cornell method of notetaking • Mind-mapping • Improving writing introduction • Assignment pitfalls 	<p>Assignment 1 part A: Listen to a 15- minute clip of a lecture on science communication and submit notes on Turnitin. Up to 300 words.</p> <p>Makes notes and a mind-map. Mind-maps are not included in word count. Submit to Turnitin by Sunday, 28 February at 7 pm.</p> <p>This question is worth 7% of course mark and part of assignment 1. Marks released within one week to help students monitor Progress.</p>

<p>Week 2 Module</p> <p>To do this week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the e-book and take notes • Watch the videos and take notes • Reflect on the e-book content • Review marks and feedback for Question 1 at end of week 	<p>If you write, you need grammar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grammar guides • Grammar without grief • Making yourself understood • Building blocks of good writing • Passive and active voice • Cutting the clutter • Confused and misused 	<p>Submit Assignment 1A by Sunday 28 February at 7pm.</p> <p>**Video conference 1 on Monday 22 February at 4.30pm**</p>
<p>Week 3 Module</p> <p>To do this week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the e-book and take notes • Watch the videos and take notes • Reflect on the e-book content • Undertake question 2 	<p>Listen carefully, read more, write well</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening carefully • Reading more • Writing succinctly • Journalistic writing • Essay writing • Reflective writing • Outline for success • Revisions and editing • Hemingway's four basics guidelines 	<p>Assignment 1 Part B: Tell a story in 60 words. Submit to Turnitin by Sunday 7 March at 7pm.</p> <p>This question is part of Assignment 1 and worth 6% of the course marks and the second part of assignment 1.</p> <p>The marks are released within one week to help students track their progress.</p>
<p>Week 4 Module</p> <p>To do this week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the e-book; take notes • Watch the videos and take notes • Reflect on the e-book content • <i>Check Question 2 marks and feedback</i> 	<p>Let me tell you a story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difference between storytelling and narrative • ABT formula • Descriptive v. storytelling • The role of storytelling in science and public health communication 	<p>Assignment 1 Part C: Reflection on a paper. Due Sunday 14 March at 7 pm.</p> <p>Write a maximum 300-word reflection on one scientist's struggle to become a better writer. Submit to This is the final part of Assignment 1 and is worth 7% of the course marks.</p> <p>**Video conference 2 on Tuesday 9 March at 5 pm**</p>

<p>Week 5 Module</p> <p>To do this week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the e-book and take notes • Watch the videos and take notes • Reflect on thee-book content 	<p>If you talk well, they will listen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The science of an effective presentation • Planning a presentation • Constructing a compelling slide deck • Presenting in person • Presentin g virtually • Overcoming the fear of public speaking 	<p>Assignment 2 Part A:</p> <p>Explore the use of narrative in science communication. Up to 400 words. You will use your written piece to present in Part B. Two papers are provided to help you get started. You may provide a reference list of sources you quote. This is not included in the word count or marking. Worth 20% of the course marks. Assignment 2A is due on Sunday 21 March at 7pm this week.</p> <p><i>Check your marks and feedback at the end of this week for Question 3 marks to monitor your progress.</i></p>
--	---	---

<p>Week 6</p>	<p>Flexible week – no new coursework or assessments</p>	<p><i>Check feedback at the end of this week on your storyboard for Assignment 2.</i></p>
<p>Week 7 Module To do this week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the e-book and take notes • Watch the videos and take notes • Reflect on the e-book content 	<p>Being internet smart in a post-truth world</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sorting fact from fiction • Reading laterally rather than vertically on the web • Confirmation bias • Evaluating evidence • Using Google Scholar • Using Wikipedia as a search tool • Referencing 	<p>Assignment 2 Part B is due on Sunday 11 April at 7pm , Week 8 due to Easter Week.</p> <p><i>First check your marks and feedback on Assignment 2 Part A to make adjustments for the following:</i></p> <p>Create PowerPoint slides and create a video presentation on up to 3 minutes on the topic in Week 5. Upload to YouTube (unlisted).</p> <p>Worth 20% of the course marks. Note due to the delay due to Easter Week, marks and feedback will be delivered by the end of Week 9.</p> <p>**Video conference 3 at 4.30pm on Monday 29 March**</p>
<p>Week 8 Module To do this week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the e-book and take notes • Watch the videos and take notes <p>Reflect on the e- book content</p>	<p>Putting it all together: Academic writing skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructing reasoned arguments • Organising ideas effectively • Summarising and synthesising information • Motivation • Structuring research reports and theses 	<p>.</p>

<p>Week 9 Module</p> <p>To do this week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the e-book and take notes • Watch the videos and take notes • Reflect on the e-book content 	<p>Write to the point on social media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target audiences • Writing style and tone • Content and idea development • Using social media in learning and teaching • Blogging 	<p>Assignment 3 is due on Sunday 25 April at 7 pm.</p> <p>An essay on a science news topic of your choice supported by primary literature. Worth 40% of the course marks</p> <p>**Final video conference on Thursday 15 April at 4.30 pm**</p>
<p>Week 10 Module</p> <p>To do this week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the e-book and take notes • Watch the videos and take notes • Reflect on the e-book content • Fill out the MyExperience survey 	<p>Revision and reflection (released with Week 9)</p>	<p>You are advised to undertake this module with the week 9 module to revise and reflect on the content of the course to help you with Assignment 3</p> <p>The course content will remain open to you until the next offering of the course.</p> <p>Please fill out the MyExperience survey. Thank you!</p>

3. Academic integrity, referencing and plagiarism

Referencing is a way of acknowledging the sources of information that you use to research your assignments. You need to provide a reference whenever you paraphrase someone else's words, ideas or research. Not referencing other people's work can constitute plagiarism. This course uses APA referencing style.

Further information about referencing styles can be located at <https://student.unsw.edu.au/apa>

Academic integrity is fundamental to success at university. Academic integrity can be defined as a commitment to six fundamental values in academic pursuits:

Honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage. At UNSW, this means that your work must be your own, and others' ideas should be appropriately acknowledged. If you don't follow these rules, any plagiarism will be detected in your work and penalised. The acceptable amount of plagiarism is zero.

Further information about academic integrity and **plagiarism** can be located at:

<https://student.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism>

The Conduct and Integrity Unit provides further resources to assist you to understand your conduct obligations as a student:

<https://student.unsw.edu.au/conduct>

4. Additional support for students

The Current Students' Gateway: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/>

Academic Skills and Support: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/academic-skills>

Student Wellbeing, Health and Safety: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/wellbeing>

Disability Support Services: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/disability-services>

5. Virtual Office Hours: Engage with me!

You are encouraged to request a one-on-one virtual meetings with me at a time convenient for you. Just e-mail me at carol.oliver@unsw.edu.au

All correspondence will be via your UNSW student account. If you do not use it, please make sure it is linked to the e-mail address you do use.