Course Outline

BEES2680

Introduction to Science Communication

School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences

Faculty of Science

Term 2, 2020
1. Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Convener</td>
<td>Dr Carol Oliver</td>
<td><a href="mailto:carol.oliver@unsw.edu.au">carol.oliver@unsw.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor</td>
<td>Bonnie Teece</td>
<td><a href="mailto:b.teece@unsw.edu.au">b.teece@unsw.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 structural steps to a cohesive and coherent essay on a science
3. How to be successful in this online course

**NOW:** Treat this course as you would a face-to-face course. Review the course outline carefully and create a work and assignment schedule in relation to your other courses to stay on track. Don’t go a whole week without connecting with the course – students who do this generally get low marks or sometimes fail.

**DAILY:** Read any announcements posted in the course.

**DAILY:** Read and respond to any course email messages, within 24 hours.

**ON A WEEKLY BASIS:** plan to spend approximately 10 hours a week completing coursework requirements, including readings. Take notes when reading course materials or watching videos (it will help you practise better note-taking skills). Research shows that writing notes by hand helps you to reflect more easily on the materials and do better on assignments. Start assignments 2 and 3 at least one week in advance.

**ON A WEEKLY BASIS:** Connect with me, Carol, your instructor if you have any questions in advance of due dates. I am here to help, and I really like to see my students do well !! :)

4. Graduate attributes developed in this course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty of Science Graduate Attributes</th>
<th>Level of Focus</th>
<th>Related Tasks &amp; Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Research, inquiry, and analytical thinking abilities.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Use of primary literature; digital literacy through evaluation of information; understanding the nature of science.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Capability and motivation for intellectual development.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>The course is aimed at encouraging lifelong learning. There is no rote learning, no final exam, and all three assignments are aimed at higher order thinking to develop skills necessary for lifelong learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Ethical, social and professional understanding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week number</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>What is due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 Module</td>
<td>Reading, listening and notetaking</td>
<td>Question 1: Listen to a 15-minute clip of a lecture on science communication and submit notes on Turnitin. Up to 300 words. Dot points are acceptable as are mind-maps. Mind-maps are not included in word count. Submit to Turnitin by Sunday, 7pm by the end of this week, Week 1.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


5. Information literacy.

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. Students receive personalised tutoring via e-mail or Skype or in-person 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.

Course schedule
### Week 2 Module

**To do this week:**
- 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

**Using grammar for compelling results**
- Sentences and paragraphs
- Doing words
- Describing words
- Common and proper nouns
- Punctuation rules
- Passive and active voice
- Common grammar mistakes

Check your marks and feedback for Question 1 at the end of the week to monitor progress

### Week 3 Module

**To do this week:**
- Read the e-book and take notes
- Watch the videos and take notes
- Reflect on the e-book content
- Undertake question 2

**Basic writing skills**
- Reporter’s questions technique
- Pyramid structure to writing succinctly
- Outlining
- Drafting
- Storyboarding
- Interpreting an assignment and rubric
- Revising and editing

**Question 2:** Tell a story in 60 words. Submit to Turnitin by Sunday, 7pm by the end of this week, Week 3.

This question is part of Assignment 1 and worth 6% of the course marks and the second part of assignment 1. The marks are released within one week to help students track their progress.

### Week 4 Module

**To do this week:**
- Read the e-book; take notes
- Watch the videos and take notes
- Reflect on the e-book content
- Check Question 2 marks and feedback

**Essay writing and narrative skills**
- How to write essays for university studies
- Essay writing versus narrative
- The power of narrative
- The role of narrative in science communication

Check your marks and feedback for Question 2 at the end of the week to monitor progress.
### Week 5 Module

**To do this week:**
- Read the e-book and take notes
- Watch the videos and take notes
- Reflect on the e-book content
- Check Question 2 marks and feedback
- Submit Assignment 2

**Presenting: The good, the bad and the ugly**
- The science of an effective presentation
- Death by PowerPoint
- Planning a presentation
- Font sizes and types
- Constructing compelling slides
- Preparing to present
- Overcoming the fear of public speaking

**Assignment 2 is due on Sunday at 7pm at the end of this week, Week 5**
Plan, storyboard, design and present on a science story using narrative via a 3-minute video using at least four PowerPoint slides in the presentation.
Marks are released within 2 weeks
Check your marks and feedback for Question 2 to monitor your progress

### Week 6

**Flexible week – no new coursework or assessments**

### Week 7 Module

**To do this week:**
- Read the e-book and take notes
- Watch the videos and take notes
- Reflect on the e-book content

**Other common writing styles**
- Descriptive
- Persuasive
- Expository
- Reflective

**Question 3:**
Write an up to 300-word reflection on the selected science news topic.
Submit to Turnitin by Sunday, 7pm by the end of this week, Week 7.
This question is the final part of Assignment 1 and worth 7% of the course marks. The marks are released within one week to help students monitor their progress.

### Week 8 Module

**To do this week:**
- Read the e-book and take notes
- Watch the videos and take notes
- Reflect on the e-book content

**Social media skills**
- Blogging
- The social media landscape
- Strategic use of multiple platforms

**Check your marks and feedback at the end of this week for Question 3 to monitor your progress.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 9 Module</th>
<th>Report writing and referencing</th>
<th>Assignment 3 is due on Sunday at 7pm at the end of this week, Week 9.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To do this week:</strong></td>
<td><strong>• Constructing a report</strong></td>
<td>An essay on a science news topic supported by primary literature. A current topic will be announced for this assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Read the e-book and take notes</td>
<td><strong>• Styles of referencing</strong></td>
<td>Marks are not released until final grades for all courses are announced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Watch the videos and take notes</td>
<td><strong>• Avoiding plagiarism</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reflect on the e-book content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 10 Module</th>
<th>Revision and reflection (released with Week 9)</th>
<th>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</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To do this week:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Revision and reflection</strong></td>
<td>The course content will remain open to you until the next offering of the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Read the e-book and take notes</td>
<td>(released with Week 9)</td>
<td>Please fill out the MyExperience survey. Thank you!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Watch the videos and take notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reflect on the e-book content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fill out the MyExperience survey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**6. 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/referencing](https://student.unsw.edu.au/referencing)

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

7. 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

8. Virtual Office Hours: Engage with me!

I will be available on Skype between 4pm and 5pm on Tuesdays during Term. My Skype name is carol.oliver42. Just drop in with your questions.

You can also request a one-on-one Skype at a time convenient for you and for me by e-mailing me at carol.oliver@unsw.edu.au.

I am very happy to answer any questions or provide advice via my email address.

I am located in Room 5112, Building E26 and also happy to meet face-to-face by appointment.

You are strongly encouraged to engage with me in relation to the course content and the assignments.

I generally aim to respond to your enquiries with 12 hours and often much sooner, so please feel free to follow up if you do not get a response in that timeframe. All correspondence will be via your UNSW student account.