ENVH 320A, Winter 2022: Introduction to Science Communication in Environmental Health

Quarter: Winter 2022

Credits & Grading: 5 credits, graded

Meeting time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:30 to 4:20pm

Class location: Weeks 1-4: Zoom
Weeks 5-10: HRC 135 (subject to change w/ COVID precautions)

Instructor:

Dr. Jane C. Hu, lecturer
Email: janehu@uw.edu
Office Hours: By appointment — email to set up an in-person meeting, or sign up for a Zoom meeting here

Course Description

This course is an introduction to communicating science, with a focus on environmental and occupational health sciences. We’ll learn about the different forms of science communication, from academic papers to the casual 5-minute bar talk, and practice our writing and speaking skills with hands-on activities.

We’ll also dive deep into skills that support good science communication. We’ll learn about tailoring our message for specific audiences, how to consume media critically, interviewing others, and how to revise your own and other people’s work. Ideally, you’ll leave this course with a better understanding of how science research makes it out into the world, and real-world skills you can apply to any situation in which you have the opportunity to communicate science.
Course Syllabus

Click [HERE](https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1515777/assignments/syllabus) or on "Syllabus" on the navigation bar on the left to access a detailed syllabus for this course.

Course Schedule

Click [HERE](https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1515777/modules) or on "Modules" on the navigation bar on the left to access a session-by-session schedule for this course.

Classroom Climate

The UW School of Public Health seeks to ensure all students are fully included in each course. We strive to create an environment that reflects community and mutual caring. We encourage students with concerns about classroom climate to talk to your instructor, your advisor, a member of the departmental or SPH Diversity Committee and/or the program director. Victoria Gardner, Assistant Dean for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion ([vg@uw.edu](mailto:vg@uw.edu)) is also a resource for students with classroom climate concerns.

Access and Accommodations

Your experience in this class is important to me. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please communicate your approved accommodations to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course.

If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DRS at 206-543-8924 or [uwdrs@uw.edu](mailto:uwdrs@uw.edu) or [disability.uw.edu](http://depts.washington.edu/uwdrs/). DRS offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s) and DRS. It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law.

Religious Accommodations

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW’s policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy](https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using [the Religious Accommodations Request form](https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/).
**Academic Integrity**

Students at the University of Washington (UW) are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic conduct, professional honesty, and personal integrity. The UW School of Public Health (SPH) is committed to upholding standards of academic integrity consistent with the academic and professional communities of which it is a part. Plagiarism, cheating, and other misconduct are serious violations of the University of Washington Student Conduct Code (WAC 478-120). We expect you to know and follow the university's policies on cheating and plagiarism, and the [SPH Academic Integrity Policy](https://sph.washington.edu/students/academic-integrity-policy). Any suspected cases of academic misconduct will be handled according to University of Washington regulations. For more information, see the University of Washington Community Standards and Student Conduct website.

**Safety**

Call SafeCampus at 206-685-7233 anytime – no matter where you work or study – to anonymously discuss safety and well-being concerns for yourself or others. SafeCampus's team of caring professionals will provide individualized support, while discussing short- and long-term solutions and connecting you with additional resources when requested.
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Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify and strategically target a variety of audiences for science communication
- Find, evaluate, and use public health information to communicate with others
- Learn and practice the basic mechanics of writing and public speaking skills
- Compose and revise written materials and oral presentations
- Describe how the media ecosystem works, including the role and importance of data collection and research in public health
- Critically evaluate sources of information

Course topics

Here’s a sampling of topics we’ll cover in the course by week. (Exact lessons are subject to change, based on students' interest and any COVID interruptions.)

Week 1: Reading a research paper

Week 2: Communicating with a general audience | Literature reviews

Week 3: Elements of writing | Executive summaries

Week 4: Editing and self-editing | Thinking critically

Week 5: Basics of writing a news article
Week 6: Public speaking basics

Week 7: Tailoring your message

Week 8: Design in science communication | Interviewing skills

Week 9: Social media and science communication | Having difficult conversations about science

Learning assessment

Like any other skill, science communication requires practice. Around half of your total grade will be based on weekly reflections and your participation in class discussions in forums or on Zoom. These are designed to provide an opportunity not only to write, but also to think about your audience and what makes for compelling scicomm.

Throughout the course, we’ll build our toolkit of scicomm skills, first practicing how to read, analyze, and summarize research for others within our field, then trying our hand at writing and talking about it with a general audience.

Here’s a summary of your major assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Total grade %</th>
<th>Due date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflections, discussions, and exercises</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>(throughout course)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature review</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Jan 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive summary</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Jan 26 (1st draft)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Feb 1 (final draft)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Feb 9 (1st draft)</td>
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<tr>
<td>News article</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Feb 16 (2nd draft)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Feb 22 (final draft)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Last week of class (March 8 &amp; 10)</td>
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</tbody>
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Class Participation

It's my hope that the discussions we have in class will allow us to learn from each other, and generate new ideas we wouldn't arrive at just by reading and reflecting on our own. It's not just that you might learn something new in class — it's also that your unique perspective and contributions will allow your classmates to learn from you, too.

We'll talk about ideas at our class meetings each week, and you'll also submit written reflections on readings or videos, or complete writing exercises. These writings will be graded on effort (read: try your best, but don't stress), and I will drop your lowest score on them, so if you flub an assignment or missed a class meeting where we completed one of these exercises/reflections, you have some wiggle room.

Absences and extensions

These are hectic times, and I know many of you have other responsibilities — coursework, caring for family, and caring for yourselves. If you know in advance you will not be able to attend class or complete coursework by the due date and you need to make alternate arrangements, please let me know as soon as you can.

Lecture slides and recordings for classes that meet on Zoom will be posted. In-person classes (which begin in February) will not be recorded. If you have further questions about the week's work, please contact me or ask classmates for their notes.

Email

The easiest way to reach me is via email: janehu@uw.edu. You can also send me a message through Canvas. I'll do my best to respond in a timely manner, but please be prepared to wait at least a day for a response, if not longer. I check and respond to emails between 9am and 5pm on weekdays.