Class schedule

The class schedule is subject to minor changes based on how the course progresses, current developments, and student feedback.

Week 1: Intro and writing skills overview

Tuesday, Sept. 6: No class (Imagine Day)

Wednesday, Sept. 7: Course introduction
Introduction to communicating science and the importance of communicating science

Friday, Sept. 9: Writing skills overview
As a group, identify some of the common writing issues that the course will address

Week 2: Scientific papers and writing skills

Tuesday, Sept. 13: Structure of a scientific paper
Examine the components of a scientific article; tips for writing a scientific article

Wednesday, Sept. 14: Scientific papers hands-on activity
Read, summarize, and report back the main points of scientific papers

Friday, Sept. 16: Writing skills 1
Topic sentences and paragraph structure

Week 3: Presentation skills, writing skills, library skills

Tuesday, Sept. 20: Presentation skills
Eight fundamental elements of giving presentations

Wednesday, Sept. 21: Writing skills 2
Active vs. passive voice

Friday, Sept. 23: Library skills (Note: class at Woodward Library)
Research tools, effective database searches, and citation management

Week 4: Communicating data visually, communicating numbers

Tuesday, Sept. 27: Graphs and tables
Communicating data, different means of visually representing data

Wednesday, Sept. 28: Visually representing data
Presenting information in tables and graphs

Friday, Sept. 30: Writing skills 3
Numbers and units

Week 5: Presentation skills and individual presentations

Tuesday, Oct. 4: Using presentation software

Wednesday, Oct. 5: Individual presentations (Day 1)
Three-minute oral presentation on a science topic in the news. No visual aids.

Friday, Oct. 7: Individual presentations (Day 2)
Three-minute oral presentation on a science topic in the news. No visual aids.

Week 6: Citations, plagiarism, and group presentations

Tuesday, Oct. 11: Citations and plagiarism
Correctly citing other work in your writing and avoiding plagiarism

Wednesday, Oct. 12: Scientific investigation group presentations (Day 1)
Group presentations of scientific investigation projects

Friday, Oct. 14: Scientific investigation group presentations (Day 2)
Group presentations of scientific investigation projects

Week 7: Peer review, self-review, writing skills

Tuesday, Oct. 18: Peer review and self-review
Guidelines on providing peer feedback and revising documents (including your own)
Checklist for giving feedback

Wednesday, Oct. 19: Writing skills 4
Writing succinctly

Friday, Oct. 21: Writing skills 5
Writing with clarity, without ambiguity, and without jargon

Week 8: Writing journalistically and using metaphors

Tuesday, Oct. 25: Structure of a news story and metaphor
Science and journalism – similarities and differences
The structure of a news story, inverted pyramid, the five Ws
What is news and how is science news different from other news?

Wednesday, Oct. 26: Writing journalistically
Ordering a news story
Comparing coverage in different media
Draft the opening of a short news story based on a scientific article

Friday, Oct. 28: Metaphors
Identifying and discussing metaphor use in popular science articles

Week 9: Audience, misconceptions in science, podcasts and vodcasts

Tuesday, Nov. 1: Know your audience; newsworthiness?
Knowing and reaching your audience; what makes something newsworthy?

Wednesday, Nov. 2: Misconceptions in science
Public misconceptions about science, common fallacies, what impedes understanding of scientific issues?

Friday, Nov. 4: Sample podcasts and vodcasts
Listen to/watch sample podcasts and videos; critique; collect tips for your own work

Week 10: Storytelling, writing skills

Tuesday, Nov. 8: Storytelling
How to tell good science stories

Wednesday, Nov. 9: Writing skills 6
Mechanics

Friday, Nov. 11: No class (Remembrance Day)

Week 11: Communicating uncertainty

Tuesday, Nov. 15: Communicating uncertainty
Commonly held fallacies in probability, and their impact on the public, including Meadow's law, the prosecutor's fallacy, faulty conditioning. Uses and abuses of statistical inference, including issues such as inferring causation from correlation, problems with multiple testing, flawed sampling schemes and bad designs.

Wednesday, Nov. 16: Communicating uncertainty
Exploring misunderstandings involving independence, conditional probabilities and risk.

Friday, Nov. 18: Communicating uncertainty
Uses and abuses of statistical inference in scientific research.

Week 12: Communicating science in other fields, new media issues

Tuesday, Nov. 22: Guest
Discussions with guests from the media public affairs, law, and/or public policy

Wednesday, Nov. 23: New media
Specific topic to be announced

Friday, Nov. 25: New media
Specific topic to be announced

Week 13: Presentation recap and course review

Tuesday, Nov. 29: Review

Wednesday, Nov. 30: Science outreach project group presentations (Day 1)

Friday, Dec. 2: Science outreach project group presentations (Day 2)