

Communication 2596

Introduction to the Communication of Science, Health, Environment, & Risk

Wednesday & Friday 11:10am– 12:30pm, Journalism 106

Instructor: Dr. Erik C Nisbet

3062 Derby Hall

Office phone: 614-247-1697

Email: nisbet.5@osu.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays 3-5pm

Course Description

This course is a basic introduction to the areas of science, health, environment, and risk communication designed specifically to be accessible for non-communication majors. Topics include how audiences understand and process science and risk information, public health and environmental campaigns, role of the mass media in shaping understanding and beliefs, expert communication, informal science learning, science and environmental documentaries and a range of other topics. In many cases we will focus on issues that have high public salience such as climate change, childhood vaccination, hydraulic fracking of natural gas, nuclear power, personalized genomics, cancer, human evolution, etc.

Many of these issues are politically and socially controversial. Students in this class come from a variety of personal and academic backgrounds, so realize that they may look at these issues from different perspectives. Expect to disagree with what others say during class discussions. Debate is not just welcome, it is strongly encouraged. Your responsibility is to be civil to others and to opinions that differ from yours. Listening, questioning, and debate are encouraged; personal attacks are not. Consider the class as a forum to exchange ideas, not to go after fellow students. Bottom line – be open-minded and mature during class discussion

Course requirements

<u>Grading/Assignments</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>% of Final Grade</u>
Class Participation/Attendance	20	20%
Weekly Review Quiz (10)	15	15%
Short Writing Assignments (3)	15	15%
Take-Home Exams (2)	50	50%
Total	100	100%

Required Readings

PDFs of selected chapters and articles will be posted on Carmen for each class – refer to the course schedule for each day's assigned readings. Students are expected to complete all readings **prior** to class so that they will be prepared to discuss the material in class and turn in all assignments on time. If any student is interested in additional readings on the assigned or related topics, please feel free to contact me and I can suggest additional resources.

Class attendance/participation/ in-class activities: A portion of your grade is based on your attendance, engagement, and participation in class, including reading and synthesizing the materials and actively participating in class discussion. Attendance will be taken every class. Participation and class attendance is worth 20 points.

Online Quizzes

There will be ten Carmen online multiple-choice quizzes that will be a review of the previous week's readings and lectures. These quizzes will go live on Friday after class and you will have until the beginning of the next class on Wednesday to complete the quiz. Each quiz is worth 1.5pts for a total of 15pts toward your final grade.

Short Writing Assignments

During the course of the semester you will have three short writing assignments/essays to complete. These will be handed out every 3-4 weeks and you will have one week to complete them. Each of these will be worth 5pts toward your final grade (for a total of 15pts).

Take-Home Midterm and Final Exams

There will be a take home mid-term and final exam for which you will have 10 days to complete each. These take-home exams will be short (1-2 pg) essay responses to questions based on the class and course materials. The final exam will primarily focus on the 2nd half of the semester but it will require you to be familiar with the material from the first half as well and connect it with the second half of the course. The midterm exam is worth 25pts toward your grade and the final exam worth 25 pts.

A Note on Paper/Essay Formats

Files submitted for a grade on Carmen should be in .docx or .doc format. The papers/essays should follow APA guidelines, including the suggested formatting of 12 pt. Times New Roman with one-inch margins, double-spaced. The number of pages given for each paper are suggestions, but if you feel that you can successfully treat the paper's subject in less space (or, conversely, need more space) that is your prerogative. That said, I have not chosen the page suggestions arbitrarily – if you fall well below or above them, you should be concerned that you are not being thorough (or concise) enough. I am grading you on substance over style...so please don't bother with adjusting margins and font sizes to make it fit.

Extra Credit

Students may earn extra credit by completing a film diary in which the view from a selected list and then write a brief 2-3 page reaction paper for each film. For each reaction paper completed, you may earn up to 1pt of extra credit toward your final grade, for a maximum of 3pts. **ALL EXTRA CREDIT REACTION PAPERS ARE DUE BY LAST DAY OF CLASS**

Cell Phones and General Politeness

A ringing cell phone during a lecture or discussion is annoying to the instructor (i.e., me) and others in the room. Please be respectful of those around you by turning off your cell phone prior to the start of lecture. If you anticipate that you will need to leave the lecture hall before the end of a lecture, please select a seat near the edge of a row or in the back of the room to avoid disrupting others when you leave. To maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning, please be

courteous to other members of the class and treat them with the dignity and respect that you expect from others.

Professor and Teaching Assistant's Use of Electronic Mail and Messaging

There may be occasions where I or one of your TAs will need to get in touch with you outside of regular class hours. Email will usually be the first means by which contact will be initiated. It is important that you check your OSU email account regularly, and make sure you purge your account of unneeded email so that new email can get through. If you do not use your OSU email address as your primary email account, please arrange through OIT to have your OSU email forwarded to your preferred account. For instructions on how to have your email forwarded, see http://8help.osu.edu/forms/mail_forwarding.html.

Some Words About Academic Honesty

It is your responsibility to complete your own work as best you can in the time provided. The Ohio State University's Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, possession of unauthorized materials during an examination, and falsification of laboratory or other data. Ignorance of the University's Code of Student Conduct is never considered an excuse for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct at http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp

Academic misconduct is a serious offense, and it is my responsibility to make sure it does not occur. If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM). If COAM determines that you have violated the University's Code of Student Conduct, the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University. If you have any questions about this policy or what constitutes academic misconduct, please contact your TA or visit the COAM web page at <http://oaa.osu.edu/coam/home.html>.

Special Accommodations

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact the professor to arrange an appointment by the end of the second week of classes. At the appointment we can discuss the course format, anticipate your needs and explore potential accommodations. I rely on the Office for Disability Services for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. If you have not previously contacted the Office for Disability Services, I encourage you to do so.

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS
8/26	Course Introduction	
	Science Communication	
8/28	Basic approaches to Science Comm	Brossard & Lewenstein (2009) – COSMOS Review Assigned
9/2	Public Engagement / Science Literacy	Skim “Science and Technology: Public Attitudes and Understanding” PDF pgs. 10-47; Nisbet and Scheufele (2009) NO CLASS –
9/4	Social Marketing / Lay Expertise	Maibach et al. (2008); Wynne (1989) NO CLASS –
9/9	Applying Four Approaches	COSMOS Review Due
9/11	Science Entertainment	Kirby Chpt. 1 (2010); Nisbet & Dudo (2013)
9/16	Science Denialism	Nisbet et al. (2015); Dunlap & McCright (2015)
9/18	Science Centers	Bell (2009), pgs. 27-53; Schiele (2009); COSI Field Trip
9/23	Science Writing/Journalism	Dunwoody (2009); Nisbet & Fahy (2015)
	Risk Communication	
9/25	Risk Perceptions	Slovic (1987); Gigerenzer (2004)
9/30	Introduction to Risk Comm	Ludgren & McMakin chpts. 1-3
10/2	Affect and Distance	Slovic et al.,(2004); Trope & Liberman (2010)
10/7	Credibility & Trust	Trumbo & McComas (2003); Slovic (1993)
10/9	Risk Information-Seeking	Kahlor (2006); Hovick et al (2014)
10/14	Anti-Vaccination Debate	Horne et al. (2015); Dixon & Clarke (2013);
10/16	FALL BREAK	NO CLASS – DON’T BE TOO WILD!
10/21	Social Dimensions	Kasperson et al. (1988); Scherer & Cho (2003); Midterm Assigned
10/23	Message Design	Nabi et al. (2008); Ludgren & McMakin chpt. 9
10/28	Message Design	Rothman et al. (2006); Ludgren & McMakin chpt. 14
	Health Communication	
10/30	Health Literacy	Guest Speaker: Lorraine Wallace ; Peters (2012); Health Literacy Report PDF Midterm Due
11/4	Public Health Campaigns	Noar (2006); Abrams & Maibach (2008)
11/6	Interpersonal Health Comm	Duggan (2006); Hendriks et al. (2014)
11/11	VETERANS DAY	NO CLASS – BREATHE DEEPLY
11/13	Digital Health	Korda & Itani (2011); Lieberman (2013)
	Environmental Communication	
11/18	Environment & News Media	Andrews and Caren (2011); Boycoff (2009)
11/20	Narrative & Environmental Risk	Guest Speaker: Kathryn Cooper ; Moyer-Guse & Nabi (2011); Cooper & Nisbet (2015)
12/2	Environmental Advocacy/Campaigns	Bruille, R.J. (2010); Rice and Atkin, Chapter 16; Climate Shift Report pgs. 30-47
12/4	Green Marketing	Cox, Chapter 10; Palenchar, M.J. & Motta, B.H. (2012).
12/9	Connecting the Dots....	Final Exam Assigned; Extra Credit Film Journal Due
12/17	FINAL EXAM DUE	UPLOAD TO DROPBOX BY 5pm

Readings are posted as PDFs on Carmen for date listed under course content, or available at link as noted.