

# COMM 4240

## Science Communication

Spring 2026



### General information

**Instructor:** Dominik Stecula, PhD

**Classroom:** Journalism Building 304

**Meeting times:** Wednesdays and Fridays, 9.35-10.55am

**Email:** [stecula.3@osu.edu](mailto:stecula.3@osu.edu)

**Office location:** 3105 Derby Hall

**Office hours:** Wednesdays 2-4pm or by appointment

### Description

This course is an in-person seminar focusing on the theory and practice of science communication to public audiences, designed for both communication majors and non-majors. Topics include how audiences understand and process science information, expert communication by scientists and policy-makers to public audiences, informal communication about science in museums and science centers, science journalism, the role of the mass media in shaping understanding and beliefs about science, edutainment and documentaries. We will spend time understanding misinformation, pseudoscience, and conspiracy theories, as well as strategies of fighting the pernicious effects of these phenomena. We will also focus heavily on the role that communication processes play in publicly controversial scientific issues such as Covid-19, global climate change, evolution/intelligent design, autism & vaccines, etc.

### Class schedule

#### Week 1.

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	January 14	Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <a href="#">How to read an academic article</a></li><li>- <a href="#">Re-reading is inefficient. Here are 8 tips for studying smarter.</a></li></ul>
Friday	January 16	Introduction to science communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <a href="#">Maktoufi, R. (2021). From Sputnik To Twitter, The History Of Science Communication. <i>Science Friday</i>.</a></li></ul>

- [Ramdeholl, R. \(2023\). \*Breaking Down Science Communication: What It Is and Why It Matters - The Average Scientist.\*](#)
- Watch: ["Making Science Accessible and Engaging" from PBS](#)

## Week 2.

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	January 21	Process of communicating science	- <a href="#"><u>Jamieson, K. H. (2017). <i>The Need for a Science of Science Communication: Communicating Science's Values and Norms.</i> In K. H. Jamieson, D. M. Kahan, &amp; D. A. Scheufele (Eds.), <i>The Oxford Handbook of the Science of Science Communication.</i> Oxford University Pre</u></a>
Friday	January 23	Public understanding of science	- <a href="#"><u>"What Americans know about science" from Pew Research Center</u></a> - <a href="#"><u>Science Literacy and Health Literacy: Rationales, Definitions, and Measurement</u></a>

## Week 3.

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	January 28	Trust in science	- <a href="#"><u>"Public Trust in Scientists and Views on Their Role in Policymaking" from Pew Research Center</u></a> - <a href="#"><u>"The Business-School Scandal That Just Keeps Getting Bigger" from The Atlantic</u></a> (you can also listen to it)
Friday	January 30	Politicization of science	- <a href="#"><u>Gauchat, G. (2012). <i>Politicization of Science in the Public Sphere: A Study of Public Trust in the United States, 1974 to 2010.</i> American</u></a>

[\*Sociological Review\*, 77\(2\), 167–187.](#)

- [“How politics makes us stupid” from Vox](#)

Optional:

- [Kahan, D. M., Jenkins-Smith, H., & Braman, D. \(2011\). "Cultural cognition of scientific consensus." \*Journal of Risk Research\*, 14\(2\), 147-174.](#)
- [“There may be an antidote to politically motivated reasoning. And it’s wonderfully simple” from Vox](#)
- Listen: [“A brief history of politics and science” from Nature](#)

#### Week 4.

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	February 4	Anti-intellectualism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Motta, M. (2018). The Dynamics and Political Implications of Anti-Intellectualism in the United States. <i>American Politics Research</i>, 46(3), 465–498.</a></li> <li>- Watch: <a href="#">“The Dangerous Rise of Anti-Intellectualism” on YouTube</a></li> </ul>
Friday	February 6	Science journalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Anderson, J., &amp; Dudo, A. (2023). A View From the Trenches: Interviews With Journalists About Reporting Science News. <i>Science Communication</i>, 45(1), 39–64.</a></li> </ul>

#### Week 5.

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	February 11	Framing science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Nisbet, M. C., &amp; Mooney, C. (2007). Framing Science. <i>Science</i>, 316(5821), 56–56.</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Stecula, D. A., &amp; Merkley, E. (2019). Framing Climate</a></li> </ul>

[Change: Economics, Ideology, and Uncertainty in American News Media Content From 1988 to 2014. \*Frontiers in Communication\*, 4.](#)

Friday	February 13	Science in the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#"><u>Schäfer, M. S. (2017). How Changing Media Structures Are Affecting Science News Coverage. In K. H. Jamieson, D. M. Kahan, &amp; D. A. Scheufele (Eds.), <i>The Oxford Handbook of the Science of Science Communication</i>. Oxford University Press.</u></a></li> <li>- Watch: <a href="#"><u>"Scientific studies" from Last Week Tonight (segment starts at 9:50)</u></a></li> </ul>
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## Week 6.

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	February 18	Climate communication case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#"><u>Merkley, E., &amp; Stecula, D. A. (2018). Party Elites or Manufactured Doubt? The Informational Context of Climate Change Polarization. <i>Science Communication</i>, 40(2), 258–274.</u></a></li> <li>- <a href="#"><u>Hayhoe - How To Talk About Climate Change So People Will Listen</u></a></li> </ul>
Friday	February 20	Science in entertainment media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#"><u>Kirby, D. (2011). Scientific Expertise in Hollywood. In <i>Lab Coats in Hollywood: Science, Scientists, and Cinema</i>. MIT Press.</u></a></li> <li>- Listen: <a href="#"><u>"The Science Behind 'Breaking Bad'" from NPR</u></a></li> <li>- Individual research proposals due on CarmenCanvas by end of day</li> </ul>

## Week 7.

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	February 25	Communicating risk and uncertainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Van Der Bles, A. M., Van Der Linden, S., Freeman, A. L., Mitchell, J., Galvao, A. B., Zaval, L., &amp; Spiegelhalter, D. J. (2019). Communicating uncertainty about facts, numbers and science. <i>Royal Society open science</i>, 6(5), 181870.</a></li> <li>- Listen to: <a href="#">Hidden Brain episode "Sitting with uncertainty"</a></li> </ul>
Friday	February 27	Test #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In class exam. Bring a pen.</li> </ul>

### Week 8.

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	March 4	Communicating risk and uncertainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Kreps, S. E., &amp; Kriner, D. L. (2020). "Model uncertainty, political contestation, and public trust in science: Evidence from the COVID-19 pandemic." <i>Science Advances</i>, 6(43), eabd4563</a></li> </ul>
Friday	March 6	Storytelling in science communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Dahlstrom, M. F. (2014). Using narratives and storytelling to communicate science with nonexpert audiences. <i>Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences</i>, 111(supplement 4), 13614–13620.</a></li> </ul>

### Week 9.

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	March 11	Storytelling in science communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Martinez-Conde, S., &amp; Macknik, S. L. (2017). Finding the plot in science storytelling in hopes of enhancing science communication. <i>Proceedings of the National</i></a></li> </ul>

[\*Academy of Sciences, 114\(31\), 8127–8129.\*](#)

- Listen: [“Stochasticity” from RadioLab](#)

Friday

March 13

Visual science communication

- [Franconeri, S. L., Padilla, L. M., Shah, P., Zacks, J. M., & Hullman, J. \(2021\). "The science of visual data communication: What works." \*Psychological Science in the Public Interest\*, 22\(3\), 110-161.](#)

- Video/podcast explainer due on CarmenCanvas by end of day

### Week 10. Spring break

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	March 18	Spring break, no class	
Friday	March 20	Spring break, no class	

### Week 11.

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	March 25	Informal science education	- <a href="#">Cain, V., &amp; Rader, K. A. (2017). <i>Science Communication and Museums’ Changing Roles</i>. In K. H. Jamieson, D. M. Kahan, &amp; D. A. Scheufele (Eds.), <i>The Oxford Handbook of the Science of Science Communication</i>. Oxford University Press.</a>
Friday	March 27	Informal science education	- COSI

### Week 12.

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	April 1	Pseudoscience	- <a href="#">Hecht, D. K. (2018). <i>Pseudoscience and the Pursuit of Truth</i>. In A. B. Kaufman &amp; J. C. Kaufman (Eds.), <i>Pseudoscience: The</i></a>

[Conspiracy Against Science.](#)  
[The MIT Press.](#)

- ["The key to fighting pseudoscience isn't mockery—it's empathy" from ArsTechnica](#)
- [Stecula, D. A., Motta, M., Kuru, O., & Jamieson, K. H. \(2022\). The Great and Powerful Dr. Oz? Alternative Health Media Consumption and Vaccine Views in the United States. Journal of Communication, 72\(3\), 374–400.](#)
- [BBC article "How food influencers affect what we eat"](#)  
[The Atlantic article "The Wellness Women Are on the March"](#)
- COSI reflection due by the end of the day on CarmenCanvas

### Week 13.

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	April 8	Social media and influencers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#"><u>Hunter, P. (2020). The growth of social media in science. EMBO Reports, 21(5), e50550.</u></a></li> <li>- <a href="#"><u>"Scientists become a source of hope and information on TikTok, Instagram" from Phys</u></a></li> </ul>
Friday	April 10	AI in science communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#"><u>Messeri, L., &amp; Crockett, M. J. (2024). "Artificial intelligence and illusions of understanding in scientific research." Nature, 627, 49-58.</u></a></li> <li>- Literature review due on CarmenCanvas by end of day</li> </ul>

### Week 14.

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
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Wednesday	April 15	Misinformation and conspiracy theories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Listen: <a href="#">“The Psychology of Conspiracy Theories”</a> from Plain English with Derek Thompson</li> <li>- Listen: <a href="#">“The Psychology of Misinformation: Why Does It Work So Well?”</a> from Drilled podcast</li> </ul>
Friday	April 17	Misinformation and conspiracy theories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Pickup, M., Stecula, D., &amp; Linden, C. van der. (2022). Who Shares Conspiracy Theories and Other Misinformation about Covid-19 Online: Survey Evidence from Five Countries. <i>Journal of Quantitative Description: Digital Media</i>, 2.</a></li> <li>- Listen: <a href="#">“Is misinformation to blame for vaccine hesitancy?”</a> from The News Literacy Project</li> </ul>

## Week 15.

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	April 22	Misinformation correction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Roozenbeek, J., van der Linden, S., Goldberg, B., Rathje, S., &amp; Lewandowsky, S. (2022). Psychological inoculation improves resilience against misinformation on social media. <i>Science Advances</i>, 8(34), eabo6254</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">“The Debunking Handbook 2020”</a></li> </ul>
Friday	April 24	Test #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In class exam. Bring a pen.</li> <li>- Research methodological design due on CarmenCanvas by end of day</li> </ul>

## Class schedule

## Important dates



Day	Date	Time	Assignment or Exam
Friday	February 20	Due by 11.59pm	Individual research proposal due
Friday	February 27	In class	Test #1
Friday	March 13	Due by 11.59pm	Video/podcast explainer due
Friday	April 3	Due by 11.59pm	COSI reflection due on CarmenCanvas
Friday	April 10	Due by 11.59pm	Research literature review due on CarmenCanvas
Friday	April 24	Due by 11.59pm	Research methodological design due on CarmenCanvas
Friday	April 24	In class	Test #2

## **Course policies**

### **Participation**

Your attendance and participation are not just important for your learning and understanding of the course material. It is also important to generate a positive classroom environment conducive to learning. I expect you to show up prepared and ready for class. At the same time, I won't take attendance. You paid a lot of money to be here! Instead of taking attendance, some in-class activities that we will complete will be graded. There will be 10 activities for which you will get points, and they will take place during randomly selected classes over the duration of the semester. These will not be announced. If you miss one, you will miss on the points for that day.

### **Class decorum**

Remember that this is an academic environment. Therefore, I ask that you minimize unnecessary disruptions (this includes, but it is not limited to, side conversations, web surfing, email and social media use, shopping, texting, and similar disruptive activities). Students are expected to always be respectful of their classmates. Debate about the ideas and theories presented in this class is encouraged. However, please remember to challenge the idea and not the person.

### **Course materials**

There is **no textbook** in this course. Textbooks are expensive and I would rather have you spend your money on other stuff. Instead, you will be asked to read a combination of peer reviewed academic articles, magazine and newspaper articles, as well as watch videos and listen to podcasts. Hopefully, the variety of assigned types of content will make learning a more enjoyable experience.

### **Late submissions**

Deadlines are meant to keep you on track. Deadlines make the world go round. Without deadlines, there would be chaos. Please submit your work on time. All the deadlines are in the syllabus on Day 1 of class. There are no late submissions on the group project. Any individual work submitted up to 48 hours past the due date will receive maximum of half credit. Any late submissions beyond 48 hours will result in a 0.

## Plagiarism

All work in this course is to be individually developed. Plagiarism includes using another person's writing without giving them credit, using large verbatim sections of the work of another person or online source (even a public source) or submitting something you have written for another class. If you are unsure, please give credit to your source or talk to me about it. Students who plagiarize will be penalized and reported to university officials. You will also receive a grade of zero for the assignment where plagiarism occurred.

## Academic integrity

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University's Code of Student Conduct, and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's Code of Student Conduct and this syllabus may constitute Academic Misconduct.

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, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's Code of Student Conduct is never considered an excuse for academic misconduct, so please review the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

If an instructor suspects that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, the instructor is obligated by University Rules to report those suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that a student violated the University's Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in the course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

If students have questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, they should contact the instructor.

## AI and Academic integrity

There has been a significant increase in the popularity and availability of a variety of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT, Sudowrite, and others. These tools will help shape the future of work, research and technology, but when used in the wrong way, they can stand in conflict with academic integrity at Ohio State.

All students have important obligations under the Code of Student Conduct to complete all academic and scholarly activities with fairness and honesty. Our professional students also have the responsibility to uphold the professional and ethical standards found in their respective academic honor codes. Specifically, students are not to use unauthorized assistance in the laboratory, on field work, in scholarship, or on a course assignment unless such assistance has been authorized specifically by the course instructor. In addition, students are not to submit their work without acknowledging any word-for-word use and/or paraphrasing of writing, ideas or other work that is not your own. These requirements apply to all students undergraduate, graduate, and professional.

To maintain a culture of integrity and respect, these generative AI tools should not be used in the completion of course assignments unless an instructor for a given course specifically authorizes their use. Some instructors may approve of using generative AI tools in the academic setting for specific goals. However, these tools should be used only with the explicit and clear permission of each individual instructor, and then only in the ways allowed by the instructor.

### **More on AI**

Large Language Model tools like ChatGPT exist and will continue to exist. Banning it now is like banning the internet in 2002 or the printing press in 1450s as far as I'm concerned. But blindly using these tools without attribution constitutes plagiarism. If you put in a question or a prompt, and then just copy and paste the generated response, that is cheating. If you use these technologies in this class, I expect you to harness these tools in a way that makes your work better, I expect you to double check things to ensure the content you submit is accurate (ChatGPT makes stuff up! A LOT!) and that you cite the exact tool you have used and provide a statement on how you used it. Using these tools appropriately takes time and effort, and it needs to be double checked and edited. If you want to use these tools, I expect you to do all these things.

In sum, if you use LLMs like ChatGPT to assist you with any assignment in the class, you have to submit an **AI statement**, outlining what tool you used, and how you used it. You will not be penalized simply for using ChatGPT, though, so please be honest.

## **Assignments and Assessment**

There are a total of **500 points** to earn in this class.

### **Attendance and Participation (In-Class Activities -100 pts)**

As stated above, instead of taking attendance, some in-class activities that we will complete will be graded. There will be 10 activities for which you will get points, and they will take place during random classes over the duration of the semester. These will not be announced. If you miss one, you will miss on the points for that day. In total, 100 points will be allocated that way (20% of your total grade in this course). Each will be worth 10 points (note that just because you are there, you don't automatically get all the points, you have to actively participate).

### **Tests (150 pts)**

We will have two tests (on paper, in class) in this course. One will take place roughly at the halfway point, one on the last day. They will cover lectures and assigned content and will be multiple choice, true/false, matching, and fill in the blank. The tests are not cumulative (meaning the second one covers the material we have covered since the first one). The tests combine for 30% of your total grade and are worth 75 points each.

### **COSI Reflection (50 pts)**

This is a small class, which should allow us to take a field trip to COSI. You will then produce a brief reflection after our visit, no more than 500 words. The exact prompt for this assignment will be provided later in the semester. This is 10% of your total grade in this class.

### Explainer video/podcast (50 pts)

You will pick a concept that we have covered in class and produce a short explainer video or podcast, where you explain it to the general audience in a way a seasoned science communicator should. More details on this soon. This assignment accounts for 10% of your total grade in this class.

### Research group project (150 pts)

Because this is a small class, it will allow us to do something unique. Here, you and I will work together on actual science communication research project. You will work as a group to move the project along and ultimately design a paper which we could turn into an academic publication. If the project garners sufficient buy in from the class, I will ensure we are able to collect the data necessary to carry it through. I will provide you with a detailed description of the assignment later in the semester, but it will include several elements:

1. Individual proposal (25 points)
2. Literature review (50 points)
3. Methodological design (75 points)

The project is 30% of your total grade in this class.

### Grading scale

Letter grade	%	Description
A	93-100	The student met the learning objectives of the course in an excellent manner.
A-	90-92	The student met the learning objectives of the course in an excellent manner.
B+	87-89	The student met the learning objectives of the course in an above-average manner.
B	83-86	The student met the learning objectives of the course in an above-average manner.
B-	80-82	The student met the learning objectives of the course in an above-average manner.
C+	77-79	The student met the learning objectives of the course in an average manner.
C	73-76	The student met the learning objectives of the course in an average manner.
C-	70-72	The student met the learning objectives of the course in an average manner.
D+	67-69	The student met the learning objectives of the course in a low but acceptable manner.
D	60-66	The student met the learning objectives of the course in a low but acceptable manner.
F	Below 60	The student failed to meet the learning objectives of the course.

## **Other relevant information**

### **Mental Health Statement**

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing.

If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting [ccs.osu.edu](https://ccs.osu.edu) or calling 614-292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th floor of the Yunkin Success Center and 10th floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766 and 24-hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 by dialing 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

### **Creating an Environment Free from Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct**

The Ohio State University is committed to building and maintaining a community to reflect diversity and to improve opportunities for all. All Buckeyes have the right to be free from harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct. Ohio State does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, pregnancy (childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom), race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or protected veteran status, or any other bases under the law, in its activities, academic programs, admission, and employment. Members of the university community also have the right to be free from all forms of sexual misconduct: sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation.

To report harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, or retaliation and/or seek confidential and non-confidential resources and supportive measures, contact the Office of Institutional Equity:

Online reporting form at [equity.osu.edu](https://equity.osu.edu),

Call 614-247-5838 or TTY 614-688-8605,

Or Email [equity@osu.edu](mailto:equity@osu.edu)

The university is committed to stopping sexual misconduct, preventing its recurrence, eliminating any hostile environment, and remedying its discriminatory effects. All university employees have reporting responsibilities to the Office of Institutional Equity to ensure the university can take appropriate action:

- All university employees, except those exempted by legal privilege of confidentiality or expressly identified as a confidential reporter, have an obligation to report incidents of sexual assault immediately.
- The following employees have an obligation to report all other forms of sexual misconduct as soon as practicable but at most within five workdays of becoming aware of such information: 1. Any human resource professional (HRP); 2. Anyone who supervises faculty, staff, students, or volunteers; 3. Chair/director; and 4. Faculty member.

## Disability statement

The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion.

If you are ill and need to miss class, including if you are staying home and away from others while experiencing symptoms of viral infection or fever, please let me know immediately. In cases where illness interacts with an underlying medical condition, please consult with Student Life Disability Services to request reasonable accommodations. You can connect with them at [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; or [slds.osu.edu](https://slds.osu.edu).

## Food Security

The Ohio State University is committed to ensuring that all students have access to adequate and healthy food. Any undergraduate or graduate student with a BuckID may confidentially use the Buckeye Food Alliance food pantries. No proof of need is required. The pantry is located in Lincoln Tower, Suite 150 (1800 Cannon Dr., Columbus, OH 43210). Check the website or call for current hours. <https://www.buckeyefoodalliance.org>, 614-688-2508.

## Religious Accommodations

Ohio State has had a longstanding practice of making reasonable academic accommodations for students' religious beliefs and practices in accordance with applicable law. In 2023, Ohio State updated its practice to align with new state legislation. Under this new provision, students must be in early communication with their instructors regarding any known accommodation requests for religious beliefs and practices, providing notice of specific dates for which they request alternative accommodations within 14 days after the first instructional day of the course. Instructors in turn shall not question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system in reviewing such requests and shall keep requests for accommodations confidential.

With sufficient notice, instructors will provide students with reasonable alternative accommodations with regard to examinations and other academic requirements with respect to students' sincerely held religious beliefs and practices by allowing up to three absences each semester for the student to attend or participate in religious activities. Examples of religious accommodations can include, but are not limited to, rescheduling an exam, altering the time of a student's presentation, allowing make-up assignments to substitute for missed class work, or flexibility in due dates or research responsibilities. If concerns arise about a requested accommodation, instructors are to consult their tenure initiating unit head for assistance.

A student's request for time off shall be provided if the student's sincerely held religious belief or practice severely affects the student's ability to take an exam or meet an academic requirement **and** the student has notified their instructor, in writing during the first 14 days after the course begins, of the date of each absence. Although students are required to provide notice within the first 14 days after a course begins, instructors are strongly encouraged to work with the student to provide a reasonable accommodation if a request is made outside the notice period. A student may not be penalized for an absence approved under this policy.

If students have questions or disputes related to academic accommodations, they should contact their course instructor, and then their department or college office. For questions or to report discrimination or harassment based on religion, individuals should contact the [Office of Institutional Equity](#). Policy: [Religious Holidays, Holy Days and Observances](#)

### **Sexual misconduct and relationship violence**

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator at [titleix@osu.edu](mailto:titleix@osu.edu).

### **Military-Connected Students**

The [Military and Veterans Services](#) (MVS) Office offers a wide range of resources for military-connected students. Whether using educational benefits or not, all military-connected students are encouraged to learn more about how the university supports military-connected students (i.e., information about tutoring, transition services, access to the veteran's lounge, etc.). For service members, should you receive military orders during the semester or know of classes that will be missed due to service commitments, please speak with your instructor as soon as possible on possible accommodations. MVS contact information: [milvets@osu.edu](mailto:milvets@osu.edu); 614-247-VETS; [veterans.osu.edu/](http://veterans.osu.edu/); 185 Student Academic Services Building, 281 W. Lane Avenue.

### **First-Generation Students**

First-generation students are central to the land-grant mission established by the Morrill Act of 1862. If you are the first in your family to attend college, you belong here. I will make expectations clear, explain any jargon, and help you navigate the "hidden curriculum." Please come to office hours or email me if you need help.