

Science Communication

001.2.3097

Lecturer: Uri Roll

2 credits, 2 weekly hours, autumn term, Albert Katz International School for Desert Studies, Sede Boqer Campus, BGU

Course description

Science does not end with scientific publication. Communicating our science to the general public is fundamental. Arguably it is even an obligation for publicly funded researchers and is vital to make our science affect change in the world. In this course we will focus on several key ways to communicate our science predominantly through digital mediums, to different crowds.

Course structure

The course will include readings and discussions regarding the efficacy of different communication mediums such as social media, blogs, and dedicated websites. It will also include improving in-person oral communication skills. It will include readings, and a lot of practical exercises.

Grade components

Active participation in class discussions	(25%)
Hand-in / presentation tasks	(50%)
Final assignment – participation in a Twitter conference	(25%)

Main topics:

1. Creating a well-designed website.
2. Writing an engaging blog based on a scientific paper.
3. Using social media (e.g. twitter, Instagram) efficiently for science communication.
4. Producing an evocative social media presence.
5. Preparing for personal and professional interviews.
6. Communicating controversial topics and engaging with confrontational people online.
7. Thinking about accessibility and diversity in communication.

Required background: desire to communicate with anyone willing to listen (open to all students in the institutes).

Lecture order

Class	Lectures	Activities
1	Introduction – course overview; scientific communication in the digital age?	Icebreaker: my life in 280 characters (tweet)
2	Knowing your audience	Types of social media platforms and their user base
3	Thinking about accessibility and diversity in communication.	Setting up/revising your social media profiles
4	Basics of website development	Begin creating a 2/3-page professional website
5	Feedback on websites, and improvements	Feedback on initial work; apply critiques and keep working
6	Going live! Publishing your ‘finalized’ website	Interacting with websites across platforms and devices;
7	Importance of social media in scientific research	Engage online with others from your field using words, images, etc.
8	How to handle controversial topics and engaging with confrontational people	Dealing with difficulties online – role play and the importance of putting on uncomfortable shoes
9	Broadening your audience by turning a scientific article into a blog	Analyze the provided examples; discussion on what makes a blog engaging
10	Radio interviews – getting the message across	Explain your research through a purely auditory medium; mock peer-interviews
11	Being the best that you can be (in job interviews)	Mock interviews – the fine balance between arrogance and humility
12	Keeping it short and tweet	Begin preparing your “Tweets” for the twitter conference; discussion and feedback from classmates
13	BIDR Twitter Conference (open to everyone in the BIDR)	Posting your 6-tweet presentation online!

References

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- Burns, T.W., O'Connor, D.J., Stockmayer, S.M., 2003. Science communication: a contemporary definition. *Public Understanding of Science* 12, 183-202.
- Canfield, K.N., Menezes, S., Matsuda, S.B., Moore, A., Mosley Austin, A.N., Dewsbury, B.M., Feliú-Mójer, M.I., McDuffie, K.W.B., Moore, K., Reich, C.A., Smith, H.M., Taylor, C., 2020. Science Communication Demands a Critical Approach That Centers Inclusion, Equity, and Intersectionality. *Frontiers in Communication* 5.
- Farinella, M., 2018. The potential of comics in science communication. *Journal of science communication* 17, Y01.

López-Goñi, I., Sánchez-Angulo, M., 2017. Social networks as a tool for science communication and public engagement: focus on Twitter. *FEMS Microbiology Letters* 365.