JRN

Journaling

JRN 500: Introduction to News Media Concepts and Institutions

In any age when scientific, medical and environmental issues often make news, this course is designed to familiarize students with the U.S. news media work. Students will learn how the industry is organized, and why it is undergoing fundamental change; how decisions are made about which stories to cover and how prominently to cover them; how the press weighs such values as freedom, privacy and national security; how the press attempts to deal with issues of scientific uncertainty and conflicting information. In exploring the culture and practices of American journalism, the course will focus on recent coverage of science, health and environmental developments. This course is intended for graduate students in health and science who seek a better understanding of the media context in which they will work, as well as for journalism M.S. students who do not have a background in journalism.

Offered
Fall, 3 credits, Letter graded (A, A-, B+, etc.)

JRN 501: Communicating Science: Distilling Your Message

Current and future scientists and health professionals will learn to communicate clearly and engagingly with different kinds of audiences, at different levels of complexity, using different forms. We’ll examine the basics of clear, two-way communication, including knowing and being responsive to your audience, overcoming “the curse of knowledge”, having a point, avoiding jargon, using storytelling techniques, being personal, asking questions, and introducing complexity in stages. Students will start by crafting a short, controversial statement about their work and why it matters. We’ll expand that to longer statements, connect it into a brief piece of writing, such as a letter to the editor or a blog post, practice answering questions about it from the public and from the media, plan a public presentation, and learn to apply these skills in the classroom. Skills learned in this course can help scientists and health professionals communicate more effectively with students, potential employers or funders, public officials, family and friends, the press, and colleagues in other disciplines.

JRN501, JRN502, and JRN503 are 1-credit modules, each lasting four or five weeks. Students may take all three consecutively in one semester or may take only one or two.

JRN 502: Communicating Science: Writing for the Public

Students will practice writing about specific and health material clearly and vividly, in ways not-scientists can understand. They will learn to use analogies, examples and metaphors to illuminate unfamiliar concepts, practice using numbers clearly and translating statistics into conversational English, learn about scientific terms and concepts that are commonly misunderstood by the public. They will learn to introduce complexity gradually, to avoid overwhelming the reader while not "dumbing down" their material. Students will learn to write for different formats, including blogs, letters to the editor or to funders, and op-edits or commentary pieces.

JRN501, JRN502, and JRN503 are 1-credit modules, each lasting four or five weeks. Students may take all three consecutively in one semester or may take only one or two.

Fall, 1 credit, Letter graded (A, A-, B+, etc.)

JRN 503: Communicating Science: Improvisation for Scientists.

This innovative course uses improvisational theater techniques to help students speak more spontaneously and connect more directly and responsively with their audience and with each other. After warm-up exercises, emphasizing physical freedom and verbal spontaneity, students take part in two- and three-person exercises and situational improvisations that focus on paying attention to your listeners, and altering your approach to meet their needs. At the beginning and end of this course, students will deliver a short oral statement about their research or a scientific topic that interests them, so they can measure their progress. This course is not about acting; it's about helping current and future scientists and health professionals connect with their audiences.

Science graduate students who had several sessions of improvisation training in a pilot session reported communicating better as teachers, researchers, students, and family members. A glimpse of the process can be seen in a short video on the web page of Stony Brook's Center for Communicating Science: www.stonybrook.edu/journalism/science.

JRN501, JRN502, and JRN503 are 1-credit modules, each lasting four or five weeks. Students may take all three consecutively in one semester or may take only one or two.

Fall, 1 credit, S/U grading

JRN 504: Communicating Science: Using Digital Media

Science and health information increasingly travels by digital media, as new ways emerge for scientists to communicate directly with the public, without the intermediaries of press or public relations. Students will learn how to use blogs, podcasts, Twitter and other forms of social media for two-way communication with different segments of the public, including colleagues in other disciplines. The course will include hands-on instruction in working with digital media, tailored to students’ interests and levels of experience.

Offered
Fall, 1 credit, S/U grading
May be repeated 2 times FOR credit.

JRN 505: Communicating Science: Connecting the Community

Students will learn how to use communication techniques, cultural competency, and health literacy concepts to reach and mobilize the community and key stakeholders on health- and science-related issues related to their research, outreach or community education objectives. The course will incorporate role-playing and community networking skills to help students make connections with key people and groups relevant to their current interests and work. This will require contact with the instructor before the start of the course to discuss students’ projects, plans or interests.

Offered
Fall, 1 credit, Letter graded (A, A-, B+, etc.)
May be repeated 2 times FOR credit.

JRN 506: Communicating Science: Advanced Writing for the Public

This course is for graduate students in the sciences who have taken JRN 502, Communicating Science: Writing To Be Understood, and want to continue developing and practicing their ability to write about science clearly and vividly for non-expert readers. The course will incorporate role-playing and community networking skills to help students make connections with key people and groups relevant to their current interests and work. This will require contact with the instructor before the start of the course to discuss students’ projects, plans or interests.

Offered
Spring, 1 credit, S/U grading
May be repeated for credit.

JRN 507: Introduction to Science and Health Concepts and Institutions

In this course, aspiring journalists without a background in science will be introduced to the values, culture, practices and language of the fields they are learning to cover. The course will explore scientific methods in theory and practice; the structure of scientific and medical education, research and funding in the United States, including the role of business and entrepreneurship; the conventions of scientific publication and conferences; ethical issues, including conflict of interest, transparency and access to information. This course is intended primarily for journalism graduate students.
The core course of the journalism master's program, this will introduce students to the range of science, health and environmental coverage while providing intensive instruction and practice in reporting and writing in journalistic formats. The goal is for students to learn how to think critically about scientific claims and controversies and how to write clear, accurate and vivid stories for print or online media. Students will practice such skills as developing sources, interviewing experts, finding stories, doing online research, organizing material, using statistics correctly, and presenting technical information in lay terms. Field trips will introduce students to work being done at Brookhaven National Laboratory and Stony Brook University Medical Center. A variety of written forms will be explored including news and trend stories, explanatory or human interest features, profiles, blogging, and first-person essays. This is an intensive course that meets six hours a week and requires at least 12 hours a week of work outside class.

**Offered**

*Fall, 6 credits, Letter graded (A, A-, B+, etc.)*

**JRN 530: The Big Story: Science Issues Seminar**

Students will be exposed to selected current issues in health, science, environment and technology, providing the context reporters need to provide sophisticated coverage. The course will be built around a series of visits by scientists and medical professionals who will discuss topics in which they are expert. Students will prepare for these encounters, question the experts, participate in the discussions, and produce journalistic reports. Topic areas will vary but may include climate change, energy research, food and drug safety, stem cell research, racial and economic health disparities, health care funding, ocean pollution, computer privacy, nanotechnology, and space exploration.

**Offered**

*Fall, 3 credits, Letter graded (A, A-, B+, etc.)*

**JRN 550: Investigative Reporting Techniques**

Students will develop skills in investigative and in-depth reporting, with a focus on how these approaches can be used to produce deeper, more illuminating coverage of science, health, the environment and technology. Use of documents, human sources and computer-assisted reporting will be included.

**Offered**

*Spring, 3 credits, S/U grading*

**JRN 588: Graduate Internship**

Students participate in an appropriate internship in a journalism outlet or an institution devoted to the master's program content themes of science, health, environment and technology. The work must involve journalistic skills related to the educational goals of the program. Student interns will report regularly to a faculty member and will complete an internship project, including a portfolio of work done.

**0-6 credits, S/U grading**

*May be repeated for credit.*