

ERST-3502H-A: Environmental Communications: Writing and Reporting 2020WI - Peterborough Campus

Instructor:

Instructor: Stephanie Landers

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Phone Number: 705-748-1011 x7199

Office: ESC C204

Office Hours: GCS 108 Mondays 6PM - 7PM (prior to class)

Meeting Times:

One three hour lecture/workshop weekly: **Mondays 19:00 - 21:50**

Class Location: **GCS 108** - Computer Lab (occasional workshop): **ESC C202**

Please Check <https://www.trentu.ca/registrar/academic-timetable> to confirm times and locations.

Co-instructors and Teaching Assistants:

AA - Carolyn Reid carolynreid@trentu.ca

Department:

Academic Administrative Assistant: Mary O'Grady

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Phone Number: (705) 748-1011 ext. 7199

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Description:

Develop skills for plain-language written communication of environmental science to non-scientific audiences (general public, community groups, decision-makers, media, government and interdisciplinary workplace groups). Public science literacy, evolving media, and new communications technologies are examined. Written assignments in popular formats are emphasized.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand and articulate the importance of public communication of environmental science
2. Communicate environmental scientific concepts to a non-scientific audience using several methodologies

3. Manage readability and accessibility of writing
 4. Strategic use of social media, online and print publications to communicate environmental science topics to target audiences
 5. Develop a considered view of how scientists and science knowledge can be communicated and represented in the media
 6. Appreciation for how communications can influence human behaviors in order to contribute to the environmental movement
 7. Ability to develop a strategically aligned environmental advocacy campaign
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Texts:

There is no required text. All required course readings and other learning materials will be available to students through Blackboard.

Assessments, Assignments and Tests:

Workshop Assignments (5% each - totalling 35%)

Mid-Term Assignment: Environmental News Article (25%)

Final Group Assignment: Environmental Advocacy Campaign (40%)

Grading:

Workshop Assignments (Total 35%)

A weekly or bi-weekly workshop assignment (due the following class). The assignments will connect with weekly readings, lectures and discussions. Workshop assignments are assessed in terms of attendance, effort, linkages to the week's learning objectives and the students level of insight.

Workshop Assignment 1: Journal 5% (Full Class Workshop): Free writing exercise to learn how to develop a first draft version of environmental focused writing that includes personal voice.

Workshop Assignment 2: Readability Statistics 5% (Group 1 & 2 Workshop): Using computer programs to check the level of readability in writing to ensure that what is written is accessible to the general public.

Workshop Assignment 3: Press Releases 5% (Full Class Workshop): Analysis of best practices for writing environmentally focused press releases and how to write a press release to connect to the media and share environmental information.

Workshop Assignment 4: Article Writing 5% (Group 1 & 2 Workshop): Best practices and strategies for writing environmentally focused articles to public audiences for the purpose of media publication.

Workshop Assignment 5: Advocacy Campaigns 5% (Full Class Workshop): The process of developing persuasive environmental advocacy campaigns and the many tools (actions) used to communicate.

Workshop Assignment 6: Tools for Written Communications 5% (Group 1 & 2 Workshop): Written communication tools (websites, blogs, flyers, newsletters and magazines) and how they are used as a part of environmental advocacy campaigns.

Workshop Assignment 7: Social Media Strategy 5% (Group 1 & 2

Workshop): Understanding of intensive social media strategy used in order to promote an environmental advocacy campaign.

Mid-Term Assignment - Article (25%)

Develop a newspaper or magazine article based on an environmental topic targeted to a public audience. The article needs to encompass writing styles that have been learned in weekly readings, lectures and workshops. Environmental topics could include;

- Scientific Study
- Scientific Discovery
- Special Event
- Disaster or Good News Story
- Technology
- Policy

Assessed for format, appreciation of the audience, additional communications tools (images/charts/graphs), challenge of material, adhering to Readability Statistics and use of metaphors, framing, personal voice, hyperlinking. *Requirements:* 3-4 page article (2000 words max.) with at least 2 visual images (reasoning explained), attention given to target audience (the public) and 'Five W's'.

Final Assignment – Communication Advocacy Campaign (40%)

Develop a detailed environmental communication campaign applying theoretical and practical lessons from the course that includes a strategy, timeline, budget and communication tools. The campaign should address an environmental topic that the group is interested in. It can be a real campaign that the group would like to undertake or simply one you imagine undertaking. The campaign should fall under one of the following categories, with an explanation as to why the type of campaign was chosen;

- Public Education Campaign
- Community Organizing Campaign
- Lobbying Campaign

- Boycotts Campaign
- Direct Action Protests Campaign

The group's goal is to produce a meaningful campaign with materials that exemplify effective environmental communication. The group is required to explain the specific strategies of the campaign and develop the campaign materials, including;

- The Critical Rhetoric
- Target Audience (Primary and Secondary)
- Persuasive message and framing
- Broad Goal/Vision
- Objective
- Strategies
- Communication tools (Actions)
 - Press release, articles, website, social media strategy, events, etc...

For each of the sample materials you will need to provide an explanation for why you chose the images and language you used. In other words, you will need to explain why you chose to invoke the values, frames, etc. you did and why the specific language you used and the images you chose are best able to do that.

Grade Total by Withdrawal Date:

Percent of the course mark available to students by the March 6th, 2020 final winter course drop date totals to 45%.

Schedule:

Lecture and Workshop Subject and Assignments

Week 1 - January 6, 2020

- Lecture Topic: Introduction to Environmental Communications
- Workshop 1 - Journal (**Full Class**)

Week 2 - January 13, 2020

- Lecture Topic: Target Audiences and Evolving Culture
- Assignment 1 Due (**Full Class**)
- Workshop 2 - Readability Statistics (**Group 1**): Computer Lab ESC C202

Week 3 - January 20, 2020

- Lecture Topic: Public Perception and Publications
- Assignment 2 Due (**Group 1**)
- Workshop 2 - Readability Statistics (**Group 2**): Computer Lab ESC C202

Week 4 - January 27, 2020

- Lecture Topic: Environment and Journalism
- Assignment 2 Due (**Group 2**)
- Workshop 3 - Press Releases (**Full Class**)

Week 5 - February 3, 2020

- Lecture Topic: Communicating about the Environment
- Assignment 3 Due (**Full Class**)
- Workshop 4 - Article Writing (**Group 1**) – Computer Lab ESC C202

Week 6 - February 10, 2020

- Lecture Topic: Communicating Environmental Science
- Assignment 4 Due (**Group 1**)
- Workshop 4 – Article Writing (**Group 2**) – Computer Lab ESC C202

Reading Week Feb 17th, 2020 - No Class

Week 7 - February 24, 2020

- Lecture Topic: Environmental Advocacy Campaigns and Strategies
- Assignment 4 Due (**Group 2**)
- **Mid-term Assignment Due: Article – Due Monday Feb. 24th (7PM beginning of class)**
- Workshop 5 - (**Full Class**): Advocacy Campaigns (Groups Assigned for Final Project)

Week 8 - March 2, 2020

- Lecture Topic: Why and how to Communicate to Government
 - Guest Speaker
- Assignment 5 Due (**Full Class**)
- Workshop 6 - Tools for Written Communications & Final Assignment Work (**Group 1**): Computer Lab ESC C202

Week 9 - March 9, 2020

- Lecture Topic: Communication-Based Intervention Techniques
 - Guest Speaker
- Assignment 6 Due (**Group 1**)
- Workshop 6 - Tools for Written Communications & Final Assignment Work (**Group 2**): Computer Lab ESC C202

Week 10 - March 16, 2020

- Lecture Topic: Social Media Strategy
- Assignment 6 Due (**Group 2**)
- Workshop 7 - Social Media Strategy & Final Assignment Work (**Group 1**): Computer Lab ESC C202

Week 11 - March 23, 2020

- Lecture Topic: Environmental Conflict Management
- Assignment 7 Due (**Group 1**)
- Workshop 7 - Social Media Strategy & Final Assignment Work (**Group 2**): Computer Lab ESC C202

Week 12 – March 30, 2020

- Lecture Topic: Alternative Tools for Communications
 - Guest Speaker
- Assignment 7 Due (**Group 2**)
- Workshop 8 – Final Assignment Work

Final Assignment Due Monday April 6th: Advocacy Campaign

Course Guidelines:

Communication:

All communication regarding the course will be through announcements in the lectures or through Trent's learning System/Blackboard. To access, students must be registered in the course, and have access to a computer (computer access is provided by various shared facilities throughout the university; if you need to use these and are unfamiliar with them, contact the Course or Laboratory Coordinator). The instructor will attempt to respond to email questions within 2 working days. Try to be on time, especially for guest speakers, be extremely respectful to guests and their valuable time.

Late Penalties:

Assignments submitted after their deadline will receive a penalty of –5 % per school day and assignments submitted more than 10 days (2 school week) after their due date will not be accepted and marked as 0%.

Respect for Learning Policy:

Cell phones should be turned to vibrate during lectures and seminar. Texting is not permitted during lectures. Questions and participation are encouraged. Anyone that is disrupting the class will be asked to leave the lecture. Notes can be taken on personal computers, but wifi should be turned off during the lecture.

Guidelines on Missed Tests, Exams, Assignments and Absenteeism:

Students are required to be available for all mid-term and final tests and exams that are scheduled by the instructor or the registrar’s office and listed in your course syllabus. Vacation, job-related, or any other travel plans are not excuses for missing tests or exams. Students are also responsible for completing all course requirements on the dates specified on their syllabus. Specific accommodations can be negotiated for students registered with SAS, but it is the responsibility of the student to make these arrangements ahead of time. Sometimes legitimate, extenuating circumstances arise beyond a student’s control, which prevent them from meeting course requirements. In such cases modified deadlines or other arrangements may be granted. It is the student’s responsibility to email their instructor immediately if they are unable to fulfill academic requirements. Adjustments to assignment submission dates and deferrals of tests and final examinations are not automatic. Students may be required to provide supporting documentation. Depending on your program, either the instructor or the Chair/Director will decide on alternative arrangements. Unresolved disputes will be decided by the Dean.

Departmental Policies:

Tests, Exams and Absenteeism

Students are required to be available for all mid-terms, tests and exams that are scheduled by the instructor or the Registrar’s Office and listed in their course syllabus. Students can notify the Registrar’s Office of their wish to observe cultural or religious holidays during scheduled examination periods by the deadline set in the academic calendar. Vacation, job-related or any other travel plans are not acceptable reasons for missing tests or exams. It is the student’s responsibility to email their instructor immediately if they are unable to fulfill academic requirements. Adjustments and deferrals of tests and final examinations are not automatic.

Students are responsible for completing all course requirements, including attending classes, completing examinations and meeting assignment deadlines on the dates specified on the syllabus. Specific accommodations can be implemented for students registered with Student Accessibility Services (SAS), but it is the responsibility of the

student to make these arrangements in advance, and to discuss accommodations of due dates with their instructors.

Adjustments to dates for assignment submissions, tests and final examinations are not automatic. Normally a doctor's note or supporting documentation is not required. However, when a student's success in the course or program is in jeopardy as determined by the instructor, documentation may be requested.

Guidelines Regarding Remote Participation

Regular participation is central to your success in the course. Courses delivered remotely may invite student participation in scheduled (synchronous) lectures and seminars via web-based platforms such as Zoom. While students are expected to attend classes that are delivered synchronously, students unable to participate fully (i.e., video and audio) or partially (i.e., audio only) in a session due to unforeseen circumstances should email their instructors who will endeavor to make alternative arrangements for participation in these synchronous discussions.

University Policies:

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty, which includes plagiarism and cheating, is an extremely serious academic offence and carries penalties varying from failure on an assignment to expulsion from the University. Definitions, penalties, and procedures for dealing with plagiarism and cheating are set out in Trent University's *Academic Integrity Policy*. You have a responsibility to educate yourself – unfamiliarity with the policy is not an excuse. You are strongly encouraged to visit Trent's Academic Integrity website to learn more: www.trentu.ca/academicintegrity.

Access to Instruction

It is Trent University's intent to create an inclusive learning environment. If a student has a disability and documentation from a regulated health care practitioner and feels that they may need accommodations to succeed in a course, the student should contact the Student Accessibility Services Office (SAS) at the respective campus as soon as possible.