

SCIE 300 Communicating Science Syllabus

Winter 2019 Term 1

Teaching Team:

Lecturers			
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Course Coordinators			
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Teaching Assistants			
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Individual office hours can be made by appointment

Credits and hours:

Credits: 3

Standing: 3rd- or 4th-year standing required

Co-requisite: One of BIOL 300, STAT 200, or STAT 241

Hours: 3.5 hours of class time are scheduled each week. You should budget an average of five hours per week for homework, assignments, and readings.

Dates, times, and location:

ALL Sections: Tue 12:30 - 2:00 pm HENN 202
 Section 109: Mon*, Wed, and Fri 9:00 am IKB 185
 Section 111: Mon*, Wed, and Fri 11:00 am FSC 1002
 Section 112: Mon*, Wed, and Fri 12:00 pm IKB 185

Class descriptions:

***Mondays:** SCIE 300 has two major group projects. To ensure that you all have an available time for group meetings, Monday slots are reserved for this purpose; there will be no lecture or in-class assessment. An instructor and/or TA may be present to provide guidance, but attendance is optional.

Tuesdays: All sections have lecture together. These serve as preparation for the Wed/Fri activities. ***N.B. Missing more than 3 Tuesday lectures will result in a 0% for the In-class Activities & Worksheets component.***

Wednesdays/Fridays: These will have in-class activities (e.g. writing skills) and lessons that will build on the Tuesday lecture, as well as presentations. ***Missing more than 5 lectures in total (Tue, Wed, or Fri) will result in a 0% for the In-class Activities & Worksheets component.***

Course overview:

SCIE 300 is divided into two main parts: communicating science to experts, and to a broader audience. This will include both writing and presentation skills. Through brief reports and talks on your own research, and the research of others, you will learn how to summarize your data in a way that clearly explains and supports your arguments. Lectures will focus on specific skills, including topics such as strategies to find pertinent literature and useful software (e.g. RefWorks).

For reaching broader audiences, the course will emphasize best practices in science journalism and storytelling. We will explore online communication tools, contribute to a course blog, and write and produce audio and video pieces. With luck and devotion, SCIE 300 could make you famous!

Recommended handbook:

A writing handbook is recommended for the course. Here are some recommendations:

- *The Little, Brown Compact Handbook, 4th Canadian Ed.* (1st ed. available at UBC Library), by Jane E. Aaron and Murray McArthur
- *Clear Technical Writing (Paperback)*, by John Brogan
- *The Concise Canadian Writer's Handbook* (on reserve: David Lam library), by William E. Messenger et al.

We have placed books about communicating science (including Brogan) on course reserve. See the course blog for a list of the available books (Explore > Bookshelf).

Learning objectives:

A. Communicate scientific information to scientific and non-expert audiences, specifically:

1. Compose documents at the senior undergraduate level in scientific and journalistic styles
2. Live presentation
3. Data visualization
4. Production of digital media through various platforms

B. Critically appraise scientific information and reporting, specifically:

1. Analysis of various media types, e.g. scholarly articles, news reports, blogs
2. Explaining factors that lead to success in communication
3. Collection of information from various and multiple sources

SCIE 300 assessment summary:

In-class worksheets and activities:	3%	(see above for attendance details)
Short, individual presentation:	3%	
Writing assignments:	10%	
Blog posts and comments:	6%	
Scientific investigation (SI) project:	27%	
Science outreach (SO) project:	27%	
Fusion project:	24%	

Participation:

The success of the scientific community depends on participation from everyone involved. Class discussions and group activities are most effective when the whole group is engaged, so your grade will depend on your attendance, participation, and doing your fair share of group work. This includes active participation in peer assessment, where you will provide each other with feedback on written and oral assignments throughout the course. Be prepared to provide as much feedback as you would like to receive for your own work. Peer review is a cornerstone of scientific advancement, and developing these skills will be essential to any area of science you pursue. It is important to be constructive and respectful, and any abuse will not be tolerated.

The Fusion project will include pointing to evidence of your participation and development as a communicator, so participation throughout the course will be crucial for this project.

Assessment regulations:

When publishing a research paper or book, submitting to a newspaper or magazine, or contributing an abstract to a conference, meeting your deadlines is extremely important. The two major assignments in

SCIE 300 have many small components that are due before the final project deadlines. This will provide you with feedback during the creative process, and keep you on track. These components have hard deadlines. Failure to meet these deadlines without an accepted excuse will result in a mark of zero for that component. You can still continue with the remainder of the project, but you will miss out on valuable feedback, which can hurt your future work. FINAL assignments will be accepted late, with a 10% daily penalty, to a maximum of five days, after which it will not be accepted. You must notify your instructor if you are submitting the final assignment late.

We expect you to attend all classes, team meetings, and scheduled activities. Please arrive on time. Only acceptable excuses, such as illness and serious family emergency, with supporting documentation (e.g. medical note), will be considered if an assessment (presentation or submission) is missed. If possible, let your instructor and group members know of your absence in advance. For acceptable circumstances, scheduling arrangements must be discussed with the instructor following the absence. Extensions may be granted (where possible) for reports and presentations, but some extensions cannot be granted for practical purposes, in which case the weight of the missed work will be allocated elsewhere.

Grades and feedback will be posted on Canvas. Requests for re-grading must be made in writing including the original work and clear indications of where the concern exists. Responses will be provided in writing and returned to the student in class.

Academic integrity:

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. You must complete your course work independently and contribute equally to group projects. Penalties carry a high risk of serious damage to your academic record; be diligent about submitting your own work and citing your sources.

The UBC Learning Commons has a wealth of information on academic integrity. Please visit this site to familiarize yourself with the difference between quoting and paraphrasing, as well as the correct way to cite sources: <http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/get-study-help/academic-integrity/>

Here is a real-world example of the trouble plagiarism can get you in:

<http://www.gazette.com/articles/gazette-58112-stories-four.html>

Canvas:

The Canvas site (canvas.ubc.ca) will be used for announcements - it is your responsibility to check in periodically (min. once per week). Lecture notes, handouts, assignments, grading rubrics, and other resources will be posted, and you will submit much of your work on assignments through Canvas.

Blog:

Each section of SCIE 300 has a course blog! Please register on UBC Blogs and join the SCIE 300 blog as soon as possible. Please refer to the document on Canvas for instructions on signing into the course blog, including the required password.