



FORS 7332
Scientific Communications
Fall Semester 2017

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CLASS HOURS: Tues & Thurs 9-10:30am
CLASSROOM: CFS meeting room and CFS 102
OFFICE HOURS: Wednesdays 11 am – 4pm (other times by e-mail appointment)

SUGGESTED TEXTBOOKS

- Scientific Writing & Communication. Papers, Proposals and presentations. By Angelika H. Hofmann. 3rd Edition.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will develop oral and written communication skills necessary for forensic science researchers and practitioners. Students must demonstrate competence with respect to technical report writing, standard operating procedures, scientific publications, grant proposals, oral presentations, scientific journalism, laboratory media relations, depositions and courtroom testimony of scientific evidence.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this class, students will be able to:

1. Develop strategies for the presentation of highly technical scientific information to a variety of scientific and non-scientific audiences.
2. Gain an understanding of the role of scientific journalism in the field of science.

3. Be able to describe the importance of laboratory documentation in relation to forensic/crime labs.
4. Demonstrate competence in technical writing.
5. Develop well-constructed written research grant proposals.
6. Critically evaluate draft manuscripts for publication.
7. Demonstrate improvement in oral presentation skills.
8. Design and deliver scientific webinars.
9. Synthesize oral presentation skills for effective communication of scientific information in legal proceedings.
10. Gain an understanding of media relation issues within a crime laboratory, and be able to produce media releases in both written and verbal formats.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Examinations and Assignments

There will be no exams for this course.

Students will be required to prepare several pieces of assessment:

1. Manuscript Review. Students will be assigned a draft journal article to review and edit. The findings will be presented to the class (15 mins).
2. Webinar. Each student will produce a webinar delivering data from previous research.
3. Three Minute Thesis. Each student will also be required to orally present their own PhD project as a 3 min presentation (according to the official 3MT guidelines).
4. Scientific Journalism. Each student will be required to produce a mock Eureka Alert promoting their own research.
5. Grant Proposal. Each student will be required to prepare a full NIH Grant proposal.

Deadlines for assignments, reports and other important announcements such as test times and locations will be announced both in class and on Blackboard. As a result, students *must* read their SHSU email and monitor their Blackboard accounts regularly in order to remain current.

Assessment	Due Date	Weighting (%)
Manuscript Review	Week 6	15
Webinar	Week 9	20
3 Minute Thesis	Week 11	15
Media Release	Week 13	15
Grant Proposal	Week 15	35

GRADING

This is a “W” course which means that at least 50 percent of your course grade will derive from writing activities designed to help you master course objectives

Final grades will be based upon the following scale: 90 plus average an “A”; 80 to 89 a “B”; 70 to 79 a “C”; and below 70 an “F”. Students should not count on a curve of the final grade. The instructor reserves the right to modify the grading scheme to accommodate for a missed test or final examination in extenuating circumstances.

The instructor reserves the right to assign a final exam grade of 0% should he/she deem the absence was not properly handled or was unjustified. Appeals will be handled in accord with University Policy Statement 900823, Academic Grievance Procedures for Students.

MAKE-UP EXAMS

There will be no exams for this course.

STUDENT ACADEMIC POLICIES

Attendance policy

Attendance will be recorded in keeping with University policy. Students are expected to attend class. Class attendance requirements will be followed in accordance with Academic Policy Statement 800401. In accordance with university policy, students will not be penalized for absences of up to three hours as long as examinations and other assigned work have not been missed. If a student is absent it is their responsibility to obtain the class material and remain current with information distributed during class. Occasionally changes in schedule may be announced in class. *These changes apply to all students, even those who were absent from class.* One letter grade may, at the discretion of the instructor, be deducted from students’ final grade if they miss more than four classes. There will be no distinctions between “excused” and “unexcused” absences. Students are expected to be on time to class. After the beginning of the class, late students may be counted as absent.

Policies concerning Attendance, Academic Honesty, Disabled Student and Services for Disabled Students, and Absences on Religious Holy days may be found at: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/aps/aps-students.html>

Use of Cell & Smart Phones, PDA’s & Similar Devices: Engaging in voice communication using a cell phone or similar communication device during class is prohibited. Leaving the classroom to receive a phone call is prohibited, except with prior approval of the instructor for urgent communications. Device sound alerts should be turned off during class. Engaging in text communication during class is discouraged, although non-disruptive occasional use is permitted. Persistent or extended texting is, however, not allowed. Per University policy communication using any electronic device during an in-class examination is prohibited.

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Class Schedule**

Week	Week Starting	Lecture - Tues	Lecture - Thurs
1	23rd August	N/A	Introduction
2	28th August	Manuscript review - SDL and IRB training	
3	4th September	Manuscripts & Publication	Conferences & networking
4	11th September	Readings - SOFT	
5	18th September	Oral Presentations I	Oral Presentations II
6	25th September	Manuscript Critique	SDL -Webinar
7	2nd October	Readings - ISHI	
8	9th October	Webinars	Grant proposals I
9	16th October	Grant proposals II	Webinar presentations
10	23rd October	3 minute Thesis	Workshop - Presentation Skills
11	30th October	Guest lecture - Lab Public Relations	3 minute Thesis
12	6th November	Guest lecture - Scientific Journalism	Workshop - Grant writing
13	13th November	Guest Lecture - Crime lab documentation	Media Release (Written/Oral)
14	20th November	THANKSGIVING	
15	27th November	Guest Lecture - Expert Testimony	Grant Proposal
16	4th December	EXAM WEEK	

** Class schedule is subject to change as required