CLASS SESSIONS: Tuesday, 5:00-6:15 pm PT (in-person), and virtual lectures

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COURSE OVERVIEW

Environmental solutions are only as effective as your ability to communicate them and achieve buy-in. But successful environmental communication is not just about getting the facts right. Before tackling an issue, it's critical to consider the intended audiences and their values and attitudes—and to use storytelling to reach them. In this class you will study communication theory, including how logic, emotion, persuasion, and social influence work. You will also learn about strategic messaging and how to develop compelling stories using conflict, drama, and character. To build skills, you will also practice messaging for different audiences, and will gain an understanding of the complex media environment in which your messages compete for attention.

Course Objectives

- To learn to decomplexify science and present it in a concise and compelling way.
- To understand the environment in which your messages compete for attention.
- To apply concepts from communication theory to improve message effectiveness.
- To build skill and confidence in message framing for diverse audiences.
- To create equitable message frames and expand communication representation.
- To understand and apply the basics of strategic messaging and outreach.
- To learn and apply the elements of story in your own storytelling and outreach.
- To develop a comprehensive communication intervention, applying course concepts.

FORMAT

Class will meet weekly on Tuesdays, and will include a combination of short lectures, discussion sections, group activities, and/or peer review workshops. If for some reason you cannot attend class, you may attend via Zoom. Also, lectures will be recorded and posted to GauchoSpace and I will find a way for you to make-up any missed activities.
Pre-recorded lectures will also be provided before class with discussion/activities to follow during our scheduled class time. Please consult the calendar and GauchoSpace site to keep up-to-date with the requirements of each class meeting.

**Requirements**

**Participation:** Since strategic communication requires effective and open communication of ideas, regular participation is expected. However, the quality of contributions is more important than quantity; if you’re a comfortable contributor and extrovert, remember to make space for introverts or those who haven’t shared yet. When you attend class lectures and discussion sections, try to show up ready to participate.

**Grading:** Assignments: 75% (feedback only, marked “complete,” all must be attempted to pass)  
Final project: 25% (graded, group work encouraged)

While this course is graded, I will be removing the stress and competitiveness of grades, in favor of you spending more time learning to communicate creatively, stress-free. This means that **I will not be grading your weekly assignments, only providing feedback.** Attempting all assignments is a requirement to pass the course, however. If you are having trouble meeting deadlines, please contact me to discuss an extension. **I will be grading your final project, however,** which counts for 25% of the grade. I recommend starting work early in the quarter and working with a group.

**Assignments:** To build communication skills—you must practice writing and communicating! Therefore, this course has assignments that you will either post to forums, bring to class as drafts for feedback, or submit to me for feedback on GauchoSpace.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>How to Submit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Favorite Science Communicator</td>
<td>Fri Apr 1 @ 5pm</td>
<td>Post to GS forum Be ready to discuss in class</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>60 Second Science DRAFT</td>
<td>Tues Apr 5 @ 5pm</td>
<td>Bring draft to class ready to workshop</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Message Environment Reflection</td>
<td>Fri Apr 8 @ 5pm</td>
<td>Post to GS forum &amp; respond to another</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Message Frame Grid DRAFT</td>
<td>Tues Apr 12 @ 5pm</td>
<td>Bring draft outline/ideas to class</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60 Second Science FINAL</td>
<td>Fri Apr 15 @ 5pm</td>
<td>Submit to GS Post to GS forum &amp; respond to another</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Deficit Model Reflection</td>
<td>Fri Apr 15 @ 5pm</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Reading Reflection / Forum Post</td>
<td>Fri Apr 22 @ 5pm</td>
<td>Post to GS forum</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Strategy Review</td>
<td>Tues Apr 26 @ 5pm</td>
<td>Post to GS forum</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Message Frame Grid FINAL</td>
<td>Fri Apr 29 @ 5pm</td>
<td>Submit on GS</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Press Release Pitch</td>
<td>Tues May 3 @ 5pm</td>
<td>Bring to class AND submit on GS</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Narrative X-Ray</td>
<td>Tues May 10 @ 5pm</td>
<td>Submit on GS Bring copy to class to share/discuss</td>
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<td>Six Word Stories</td>
<td>Fri May 13 @ 5pm</td>
<td>Submit on GS</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Story of Science &amp; Nature</td>
<td>Tues May 17 @ 5pm</td>
<td>Prepare to tell/present story to class Submit on GS</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Forum Post – Art &amp; Visual Stories</td>
<td>Fri May 27 @ 5pm</td>
<td>Submit on GS</td>
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<td>Final Press Release (optional)</td>
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Assignment Format: Assignments should be uploaded to GauchoSpace as a Word document. Please be mindful of the time each assignment is due. Assignments should be saved as: Lastname_Firstname_AssignmentName_MMDDYY.docx.

TOPIC OUTLINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Mar 29</td>
<td>Science Comm Overview + Creating Digestible Science</td>
<td>Simplifying Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Apr 5</td>
<td>The Message Environment + The Art of Framing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Apr 12</td>
<td>Deficit Model &amp; Persuasion Theory + Power of Social Networks &amp; Cues</td>
<td>Science of Science Communication</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Apr 19</td>
<td>Communication for EJ + Communication Strategy Basics</td>
<td>Equitable Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Apr 26</td>
<td>Applied Communication Strategy + Audience Research &amp; Impact</td>
<td>Strategy</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>May 3</td>
<td>Managing the Press + Story, Conflict, &amp; Drama</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>May 10</td>
<td>The Power of Myth + Science Narratives</td>
<td>Storytelling</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>May 17</td>
<td>Stories of Science &amp; Nature 1 + Stories of Science &amp; Nature 2</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>May 24</td>
<td>Stories of Science &amp; Nature 3 + Art &amp; Visual Storytelling</td>
<td>Environmental Art</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>May 31</td>
<td>Final Presentations 1 + Final Presentations 2</td>
<td>Wrap-Up</td>
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**Readings:** Readings are meant to augment what you learn in class lectures. There are more readings than you can likely comfortably get through for each class period, but please do your best to extract the main points of each paper—just be sure to spend time with those that you are most interested in. 

*Please note that readings are subject to change; always check GauchoSpace!*  

**UNIT 1: SIMPLIFYING SCIENCE**

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**WEEK 1 – Mar 29**

Please check Gauchospace for posted lectures and videos before coming to class!

**Science Comm Overview.** Course intro, framing, basic science communication tips
- No readings assigned.

**Creating Digestible Science.** Best practices in decomplexifying science, review of science communicators and practice speaking simply
- YouTube tutorial: [How to explain scientific ideas: 6 SIMPLE tips from a communication expert](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQw4w9WgXcQ) | FameLab

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**WEEK 2 – Apr 5**

Please check Gauchospace for posted lectures and videos before coming to class!

**The Message Environment.** Audience considerations, the science media landscape, US public perceptions of science, anti-science, pop science

**Examples of anti-environmental propaganda (optional):**

**The Art of Framing.** Frames, schemas, developing multiple issue frames, how and when to use different frames

UNIT 2: THE SCIENCE OF SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

Week 3 – Apr 12

Please check Gauchospace for posted lectures and videos before coming to class!

The Deficit Model & Persuasion Theory. Deficit model, persuasion, dual-process theories, fear appeals

The Power of Social Networks & Cues. Group identity, social influence, psychology of climate denial, leveraging group cues
UNIT 3: EQUITABLE COMMUNICATION

Week 4 – Apr 19

Please check Gauchospace for posted lectures and videos before coming to class!

Communication for Environmental Justice. Equity framing, inclusive messaging, positionality, expanding representation


UNIT 4: STRATEGY

Communication Strategy Basics. Developing goals & objectives, campaign design, theories of change, community-based social marketing

- *(skim)* Grant Craft (n.d.) Mapping change: Using a theory of change to guide planning

Week 5 – Apr 26

Please check Gauchospace for posted lectures and videos before coming to class!

Applied Communication Strategy. Guest Speaker: Deb Berlin, former Director of Strategic Communication for the EPA under the Obama Administration to discuss campaign design


Audience Research & Impact. Design and methodology for audience research & evaluation, audience segmentation

Week 6 – May 3

Please check Gauchospace for posted lectures and videos before coming to class!

Managing the Press. Guest Speaker: Lance Orozco, News Director of KCLU since 2001. Host of “Science Fridays”.


UNIT 5: STORYTELLING

Story, Conflict, & Drama. Storytelling basics, conflict, consuming/producing media, spectrum of drama, use of emotion

- Audio lecture by Richard Hutton, former Disney Imagineer & Oscar winning documentary producer, “Storytelling”

Week 7 – May 10

Please check Gauchospace for posted lectures and videos before coming to class!

The Power of Myth. Hero’s journey, role of myth in storytelling, review six word stories

- Audio assignment: “Six Word Stories,” by Richard Hutton
- The Hero’s Journey “Cheat Sheet,” by Dan Bronzite

Science Narratives. Identifying science narrative structures, review narrative X-rays

Week 8 – May 17

Please check Gauchospace for posted lectures and videos before coming to class!

Stories of Science & Nature – Group 1. Presentation of student stories with critiques

Week 9 – May 24

Please check Gauchospace for posted lectures and videos before coming to class!

UNIT 6: ENVIRONMENTAL ART

Art & Visual Storytelling. Science communication in informal settings, environmental art, design, and creative indicators

- No readings assigned.

Stories of Science & Nature – Group 2. Presentation of student stories with critiques

Week 10 – May 31

Final Presentations 1. Presentation of draft final projects (in groups) with critiques.

Finals Week – Please refer to Gauchospace for details.

Final Presentations 2. Presentation of draft final projects (in groups) with critiques (if needed).
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