Instructor:
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Introduction
This is a course about communication, mostly writing. We will spent at least half of class time writing. The remaining time will be used for set up and discussion of writing exercises, and in interaction with guests who are making their living as science communicators. Note that this class is NOT about you communicating your own science, it is about you learning how science is communicated, and experimenting with some of those forms.

Every one of you has already learned to write – you’re in college! – and every one of you can improve. This class is about moving each of you forward from where you start. It is not about requiring that everyone achieve a specific level or threshold in order to get a particular grade. So if you’re a fantastic writer on your way to winning a Pulitzer or Man Booker award, this class will still make you work. And if you’re an English as a second language student still struggling to clearly articulate your ideas in a non-native language and culture, this class will make you work as well.

You will have some out-of-class work, more in the latter half of the course, but most of the writing will be in class. Therefore, if you have a laptop, tablet or other electronic device you can use to engage in free-writing in an easy to send/edit form (e.g., .docx, pdf, rtf, txt), please bring it to class. I will bring archaic forms of the same (e.g., notebook and pen) so that everyone can write. The point is for you to: (1) be able to sit down in class and write; (2) be able to send/hand that writing to me and to others.

Learning Objectives
In this class you will:
- Understand what plagiarism is and how to not (ever) engage in it.
- Master writing mechanics, including but not limited to sentence, paragraph and section structure.
- Explore writing style in your own work and enhance your ability to write in a compelling way.
- Become comfortable with free-writing, and improve your writing skill.
- Learn the structure of peer-reviewed scientific writing, and be able to translate scientific abstracts into other more widely digestible forms of science communication.
• Become familiar with a range of science communication writing forms through direct interaction with practicing experts.

**Required Abilities**
This class will require you to engage in the physical act of writing while in class, as well as while out of class. You will also be required to engage in small group work, to stand up and read your work or the work of others to the class, and to engage in question and answer (e.g., conversation) with class guests. If there are reasons why these types of engagements are difficult-to-impossible for you, please let me know now so that we can work out alternate arrangements for you. If you have, or think you have, a temporary or permanent disability that impacts your participation in this or any course, please contact Disability Resources for Students (DRS) at: 206-543-8924 V / 206-543-8925 TDD / uwdrs@uw.edu e-mail / http://www.uw.edu/students/drs if you haven’t already. A complete description of the disability policy of the College of the Environment can be found here.

**Equity and Inclusion**
This class will succeed, in part, because each of you bring different lived experience, different culture and different abilities to our mix. Together, we represent more diversity than any single person in the class. That said, please be aware how you are seeing and treating people in the class, and make sure that everyone is given respect, is supported in their work, and is included in the work we all do together. Your work in this class is not just about making your communication skills better; it is also about helping your classmates move forward.

With particular respect to religious differences, here is a verbatim statement from the UW Office of the Registrar: “Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW’s policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at the UW Religious Accommodations Policy. Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the Religious Accommodations Request form (https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/).”

**Life**
Every student (and every faculty member) has sudden circumstances that get in the way of their timely arrival in class, or their ability to submit work on time, or even just do their very best work. Sickness, stress, missing the bus, oversleeping, weddings, funerals, you name it. If you would like me to take any-all of this into account, **it is your responsibility to inform me in advance of class or an assignment submission date what the problem is**. If your work is part of a team (pair-share, group) effort, it is also your responsibility to inform all of your teammates in advance so that they can attempt to make their own plans.
Academic Integrity
I expect everyone to turn in their own work. And this means their own writing and their own thinking. We’ll go over plagiarism the first day of class, so that everyone can become familiar with the definitions. Here is an excerpt from the College of the Environment website about academic integrity: “Academic integrity requires that the course work (drafts, reports, examinations, papers, projects) you present to an instructor reflects (honestly and accurately) your own intellectual and creative efforts. Academic misconduct occurs when a student presents someone else’s work as their own or when a student knowingly assists someone else to do so.” You can find out more information here.

If I discover that any student has been involved in cheating or plagiarism, I will report you to the Dean's Office of the College, where you may have to enter the academic misconduct process. If you are found responsible for academic misconduct, I will give you a zero on the writing exercise. This will affect your final grade.

How can I tell that you have lifted material from someone else's writing? The UW uses the comparison tool Vericite which compares the submitted student work with an extremely wide range of published work as well as a database of former student work.

Readings
There are no required texts for this class.

I will have a "library" of texts written by science communication experts about how to be a better writer. You are welcome to come to my office and borrow them (one week max borrowing time). There will be required peer-reviewed and news media articles. These will be posted on the website for you to download.

Grading
In this course, it is possible to accumulate 1,000 points. Refer to the MB Science Communication Grading file on the website for a breakdown of the points available for each exercise, and a simple rubric for how those points will be allocated.

I translate points into a percentage, and from there into a grade point. Here is an example:
900 points out of a possible 1,000 = 90% (=900/1000)
95-100% = 4.0; and each percentage point is worth one grade point going down. So:
- a 90% = 3.5,
- an 80% = 2.5, a 70% = 1.5,
- and a 0.7 (the lowest grade point given out at the UW that is above 0) = 62%.

The grading in this course is set up specifically to assess where you are when you enter the course, and where you are at the end of the course. I am looking for advancement in mechanics and improvement in style and narrative. Another way of saying this is: Every student in the course will be graded independently; there is no "A work" or "C work."