This course—which serves in part as a "gateway" to the MS program in science and technology journalism—offers an introduction to major concepts, practices, institutions, and participants in the field. Goals include helping you to begin exploring

- issues that science writers face in their work
- media coverage of issues in science and technology
- dia theory as it relates to science communication
- the scholarly literature on science communication
- career opportunities in science and technology journalism
- opportunities for internships and thesis research
- organizations and publications for science writers

An additional goal is to help you continue developing your writing skill. These goals will be pursued mainly through classroom activities, readings, conferences with the instructor, and writing assignments.

Classroom activities will include presentations, discussions of assigned readings, and workshops based on class members' writing. Because much of your and others' learning will depend on your participation, you will be expected to attend class regularly. Only in exceptional circumstances should anyone miss more than two sessions of the course.

The reading for the course comes largely from five books:


Articles and other readings also will be assigned. Most reading assignments are noted on the syllabus below, and others will be announced in class.

Students are expected to meet individually with the instructor twice during the semester for conferences on their work. One conference should be before mid-semester and the other after. Additional conferences are readily available on request.
The graded assignments for the course, the dates they are due, and the percentages of the baseline grade they will constitute, are the following:

- Report on an organization for science writers  9/5   5%
- Memo on the crisis-communication workshop  9/19   5%
- Discussion of an award-winning series  9/26   5%
- Points of interest in readings for 10/10  10/10  5%
- Report on three internship portfolios 10/17  10%
- Transformative explanation 10/24  5%
- Interview report 10/31  15%
- Discussion—why assigned articles are among the best 11/7  5%
- Discussion—favorite and least favorite articles 11/14  5%
- Rewrite of interview report 11/21  5%
- Presentation based on final assignment 11/28  10%
- Written version of final assignment 11/28  25%

These assignments are explained on the course schedule below. Further information will be available in class.

Grading will be as follows: A+:98, A:95, A-:92, B+:88, B:85, B-:82, etc. For all assignments, both content and crafting will be considered. All writing assignments are to be word-processed and double-spaced, with an unjustified right margin; pages are to be numbered. Writing is to be submitted on time. Except when otherwise specified, please bring copies for the instructor, your classmates, and yourself, as writing assignments generally will be discussed in class.

Final grades for the course will be based on the assignments listed above. In borderline cases, however, outstanding class participation may increase one's grade. Excessive unexcused absences or substantial lateness in submitting work may decrease one's grade.

The success of a course such as this one depends on contributions from the students as well as from the teacher. Suggestions for making the course more educational and more enjoyable are appreciated at any time.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Session</th>
<th>Main Topics/Activities</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Introduction: The Participants and the Course</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Discussion: The Scope of the Science-Writing Field</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presentation: Some Organizations and Publications for Science Writers</td>
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<td>Discussion: Some Issues in Science and Technology Journalism</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/5</td>
<td>Discussion: Reading for Today</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Workshop: Writing Assignment for Today</td>
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Main Reading Due:
- **Embargoed Science**: Chapter 1 (“An Overview of News about Science and Medicine”) and Chapter 2 (“A Brief History of Embargoes in Science Journalism”)
- “The Climate for Science Reporting” by Michael Schudson and Julia Sonnevend (*Columbia Journalism Review*, July/August 2011, p 63)
[Note: In this course, you are expected to become actively engaged with the reading. As you read, please ask yourself questions such as the following:

- What material in this reading is especially useful, interesting, insightful, or otherwise worthwhile?
- What points in this reading seem debatable? What counter-arguments might be made?
- What research methods did the author use? How valid were those methods? (Or, more broadly: How—and how well—did the author gather the information?)
- What issues do you think the author faced in preparing this reading? How—and how well—do you think the author addressed the issues?
- How well is the item written? If the item is clear and interesting, what aspects of the writing make it so? If the item is confusing or dull, how could it be made more clear or interesting?

Also, please keep notes to use in classroom discussion.]

Writing Due: Report on an Organization for Science Writers
Instructions: Look at the websites of several organizations in science communication, and decide which organization you would most like to join. Then, in about 500 words (2 double-spaced pages), say why you chose the organization you did, and explain how you would use the resources of the organization to help you develop as a science communicator.

[Note: Your writing for this course should be informative, thoughtful, well organized, clear, mechanically sound, and concise. Unless otherwise specified, write for an audience of your peers in this course; please write to communicate, not to impress. When appropriate, feel free to be witty. As noted above, both content and crafting will be considered in grading all assignments. More than one draft is needed for writing to reach the level expected in this course.]
science journalism students who did not attend. In the memo, please note some important issues identified in the workshop and present the pieces of advice that you think were most useful. If you disagreed with any major advice in the workshop, you may say so; if you do, say why you disagree.

9/26  Discussion: Reading for Today in *Science in Public*
5  Workshop: Writing Assignment Due Today

**Main Reading Due:**
- *Science in Public*: Chapter 1 (“The Recent ‘Public Understanding of Science Movement’”), Chapter 2 (“Science in Public Culture”), Chapter 3 (“Popular Science: Friend or Foe?”), Chapter 4 (“Popularization, Public Understanding, and the Public Sphere”), and Chapter 5 (“Media Issues in the Public Understanding of Science”)

**Writing Due: Discussion of the Series Assigned**
Instructions: Read the series “Altered Oceans,” and look at the accompanying multimedia components. In about 500 words (2 double-spaced pages), identify major strengths regarding content and crafting. Support your points with examples or other evidence. If appropriate, relate some of your observations to points in other reading for the course.

10/3  Discussion: Reading for Today in *Science in Public*
6  Discussion: Research Ethics—Graduate Student and Other Perspectives
Introduction to Interview Assignment (due 10/31)

**Main Reading Due:**
- *Science in Public*: Chapter 8 (“Science in Museums”), Chapter 9 (“Initiatives and Activities in the Public Understanding of Science”), and Chapter 10 (“A Protocol for Science Communication for the Public Understanding of Science”)
- *Encyclopedia of Science and Technology Journalism*: “Science Centers and Science Museums” by David Chittenden, “Science Café” by Maria Powell
- *Encyclopedia of Science and Technology Communication*: “Research Ethics, Overview” by Jason Borenstein, “Conflicts of Interest in Science” by Katherine A. McComas

**Writing Due: (none—it’s time for a break)**

10/10  Discussion: Reading for Today
7  Discussion: Internships in Science Communication
Browsing: Some Internship Portfolios
Main Reading Due:
- *Communicating Uncertainty*: Chapter 2 (“How Journalists Deal with Scientific Uncertainty” by S. Holly Stocking) and Chapter 4 (“Scientists, Journalists, and the Meaning of Uncertainty” by Sharon Dunwoody)
- some readings about doing internships

Writing Due: 10 Points of Interest from the Reading for Today
Instructions: In the reading assigned for today, identify 10 points that you find interesting, useful, or both. For each, say why you find it interesting, how you expect to use this knowledge, or both. This assignment should run about 500 words.

10/17 Workshop: Writing Assignment for Today
8 Discussion: Reading for Today
Introduction: Options for Final Writing Assignment

Main Reading Due:
- *Communicating Uncertainty*: Chapter 6 (“Popular Beliefs, Media, and Biotechnology” by Susanna Hornig Priest), Chapter 11 (“The Importance of Understanding Audiences” by Carol L. Rogers), and Chapter 12 (“Effective Explanation of Uncertain and Complex Science” by Katherine E. Rowan)
- *Encyclopedia of Science and Technology Communication*: “Uncertainty in Science Communication” by S. Holly Stocking
- selected articles in *The Best American Science Writing 2011*

Writing Due: Report on Three Internship Portfolios
Instructions: Read the internship portfolios submitted by three master’s students in the science and technology journalism program. State the main things that by reading the portfolios you learned (about doing an internship, about science communication, or in other regards). If you wish, also comment on other aspects of the portfolios. This assignment should run about 500 to 1000 words. Please be concise.

10/24 Guest Segment(s) by One or More Recent Interns
9 Workshop: Writing Assignment for Today
Discussion: Reading for Today

Reading Due:
- some magazine articles on issues in science and technology journalism
- more articles in *The Best American Science Writing 2011*

Writing Due: A Transformative Explanation
Instructions: Drawing on Chapter 12 of *Communicating Uncertainty* and on material in class, prepare a transformative explanation. This
explanation may be as brief as one double-spaced page, or it may be longer.

10/31 Discussion: Some International Perspectives on Science Journalism
10 Discussion: Some Aspects of Communication Theory
Workshop: Writing Assignment Due Today

Reading Due:
- selected articles on international aspects of science journalism

Writing Due: Interview Report
Instructions: Interview one or more science communicators doing types of work you might like to do. Then prepare a report describing the work and discussing issues faced. Please relate the issues to readings assigned for the course. This assignment should run about 1000 words.

11/7 Discussion: Some Journal Articles Reporting Research on Issues in Science
11 Science and Technology Journalism
Progress Reports: Final Assignment
Workshop: Writing Assignment Due Today

Reading Due:
- some journal articles relating to issues in science and technology journalism
- more articles in The Best American Science Writing 2011

Writing Due: Discussion of Why the Assigned Articles Are Among the Best
Instructions: Read the assigned articles in The Best American Science Writing 2011. Then speculate on why they were considered among the best. If appropriate, relate some of your observations to points made in other readings thus far for the course. This assignment should run about 500 words.

11/14 Discussions with One of More Science Communicators about Issues Faced
12 (might be by distance media)
Progress Reports: Final Assignment
Workshop: Writing Assignment Due Today

Reading Due:
- some writing by science communicator(s) to be talked with
- rest of The Best American Science Writing 2011

Writing Due: Discussion of Favorite and Least Favorite Articles
Instructions: Read the assigned articles in The Best American Science Writing 2011. Decide which one you like the most and which one you like the least. Explain your choices. If appropriate, relate some of your judgments to points made in other readings for this course. This assignment should run about 500 words.
11/21 Guest Segment: Angela Clendenin, Director of Communications and Public Relations, College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences
Workshop: Draft of Final Assignment
Writing Due: Rewrite of Interview Report
Instructions: Using feedback from classmates and the instructor, prepare a rewrite of the interview report. Please take into account suggestions regarding both content and crafting.

11/28 Presentations: Final Assignment
14 Wrap-Up
Final Project:
Please do one of the following:
• Write a feature article of about 1000 words on an issue in science or technology. Accompany the article with a discussion, also running about 1000 words, of the issues you encountered in preparing it. The article should employ approaches used in feature articles read for the course, and the discussion should draw on class readings about issues in science and technology journalism.
• Write a report, of publishable quality, on an issue in science and technology journalism that was not discussed extensively in the course. To gather information for the report, you should both read relevant literature and do interviews. The report should run about 2000 words. If possible, you should specify a suitable site of publication.
• Read two or more books on an issue in science, technology, or science and technology journalism. Then write a well-integrated “essay review” describing, summarizing, and evaluating the books and presenting your own thoughts on the issue(s). The review should run about 2000 words.
• Write an article on science and technology journalism in a country other than the United States. To do so, draw on written sources and interviews. Both provide an overview of science and technology journalism in the country chosen and discuss issues that exist; include ties to assigned readings. The article should run about 2000 words.

Note: You have until noon, Friday, December 2 to submit the final version of your final project.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, in Cain Hall, Room B118, or call 845-1637. For additional information, visit http://disability.tamu.edu.

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