

GEO 4938/6938 Syllabus

Communicating Science

Instructor: Stephen Mullens – stephen.mullens@ufl.edu

Office: Turlington 3126-B

Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:35-12:35; Thursdays 10:40 – 12:35 & 1:55-2:45; or by appointment

Class times:

Tuesdays at 1:55-4:55pm

Turlington Hall 3018

Textbook:

Olsen, R., 2015: *Houston, We Have a Narrative*. University of Chicago Press, 252 pp.

Lundgren, R.E., McMakin, A.H., 2018: *Risk Communication: A Handbook for Communicating Environmental, Safety, and Health Risks*. Wiley-IEEE Press, 6th edition, 517 pp.

Course Objectives – What we're going to cover:

- Compare and explain the differences between communicating qualitative and quantitative science.
- Construct narratives in a systematic way to aid science communications.
- Evaluate communications from science organizations for their ability to use narrative.
- Evaluate and translate p-values and statistically significant, near significant, and non significant results to the public.
- Evaluate and understand what fields attempt to communicate risk, the importance of communicating risk, and who their audiences are.
- Evaluate, create a plan, and deliver a presentation meant for a public audience that motivates the audience to take action to deal with a risk to them or their community.
- Understand and contrast principles for communicating with the public, media, and politicians, including gaining trust while maintaining ethics.
- Examine and create conference presentations and scientific journal articles with a scientific audience using narrative and principles.

Grading Structure:

40% - Exam (15 and 25)

25% - Final Project

25% - Homework assignments

10% - Attendance

Grades:

A	92.0-100%	B+	87.0-89.9%	C+	77.0-79.9%	D+	67.0-69.9%
A-	90.0-91.9%	B	83.0-86.9%	C	73.0-76.9%	D	63.0-66.9%
		B-	80.0-82.9%	C-	70.0-72.9%	D-	60.0-62.9%

No classes on:

There are no holidays that fall on a Tuesday.

Tentative Weekly Schedule:

Week	Tuesday: 7-9
19-Aug	Introduction / Writing
26-Aug	Quantitative
2-Sep	Qualitative
9-Sep	NWA
16-Sep	Narrative – 1
23-Sep	Narrative – 2
30-Sep	Statistical Significance
7-Oct	Exam
14-Oct	Introducing Risk Comm
21-Oct	Principles of Risk Comm
28-Oct	Planning Risk Comm
4-Nov	Presenting Risk Comm
11-Nov	Cases of Risk Comm
18-Nov	Educating the Public
25-Nov	Media and Politicians
2-Dec	Final Project
9-Dec	Exam 10am on Dec 11th

UF POLICIES

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

You are all bound by the student academic honor code.

“We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.”

“On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment”

ACCOMMODATIONS:

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

EXCUSED ABSENCES:

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

I appreciate that unexpected events occur in all of our lives. Acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to participate in class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays, court-imposed legal obligations, and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate. If such events occur, and it causes you to attend an event (e.g., funeral, job interview) or a facility (e.g., doctor’s office, courthouse), then you will need to prove that you went to this event/facility on that date by providing some form of documentation of the event. An event program, a doctor’s note, or similar paperwork will suffice. Upon producing this documentation, you will be able to make up the midterm exam or any graded class activities from that date.

A student should inform the faculty member of the religious observances of his or her faith that will conflict with class attendance, with tests or examinations, or with other class activities prior to the class or occurrence of that test or activity.

DISCLAIMER:

This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.