Comm 6660/STS 6661
Public Engagement in Science
Spring 2014

This syllabus (including any updates) appears at http://blackboard.cornell.edu
This version updated: 21 February 2014

Instructor
Bruce Lewenstein
Professor of Science Communication
321 Kennedy Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853
Phone: 255-8310
Fax: 254-1322
E-mail: b.lewenstein@cornell.edu

Office hours
Wednesday, 11:15-1:00 in Kennedy 321
and happily by appointment

Time and location
Thursday, 10:10-12:05, 326 Kennedy Hall

Course description
In recent years, both the scientific community and the science studies community have increasingly referred to “public engagement in science.” But as more people have started using the term, its meaning has become less clear; “public engagement” has become a label to which people concerned about science and public have attached their own concerns.

In the past few years, various "texts" (some peer reviewed and published, some performed as research symposia, one posted as a semi-scholarly wiki) have summarized the state of the literature. This semester, we will read, compare, and contrast these texts. We will seek to understand how (or if) they are in conversation with each other.

Everyone will be expected to do the reading and come to class prepared to explore the readings. To "explore the readings" means you've read (or viewed) the texts, you've thought about them, and you're ready to see where the arguments lead. It also means you've identified inconsistencies or problems with the logic and are ready to tear the texts apart. You will usually find material that is intellectually challenging: it may require multiple readings to make sense, or it may challenge beliefs you already have (even though you may not have known that you have them). You will be expected to justify your reactions to the texts with specific references to the texts or, when relevant, to other texts. As the class meets in physical space only once a week, cyberspace discussions via Blackboard will play a key role in the course.
Each student will be responsible for helping lead one of the in-class discussions. You will come to class with a specific set of questions raised by the texts. Those questions may emerge from the content of the reading, or they may question the logic or approach taken by the author(s). It will be helpful for discussion leaders to bring the questions on a handout for everyone. Even better would be to circulate the questions a couple of days before class, via the class bulletin board (on the Blackboard system).

**Texts**

Rödder, S., Franzen, M., & Weingart, P. (2012). *The sciences' media connection: public communication and its repercussions*. Dordrecht ; New York: Springer. [You can download .pdfs of the individual chapters through the Cornell Library, http://www.springerlink.com.proxy.library.cornell.edu/content/j7t241/#section=996487&page=1. Because Cornell "subscribes" to the book, you can also order a print copy for about $25 – see the button at the top of the page when you click the link above]


Fischhoff, Baruch, & Scheufele, Dietram A. (Eds.). (2013). *The Science of Science Communication (Papers reprinted from Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, vol. 110, suppl. 3, pp. 13696 and 14031-14110)*. Washington, DC: National Academy of Sciences. Available at http://www.pnas.org/content/110/Supplement_3. [This colloquium was held in May 2012. We will read some of the papers from it and watch some of the videos from it.]

A second colloquium on science of science communication was held in September 2013. The papers are not yet available, but we will watch some of the videos of the presentations. They are available at http://www.nasonline.org/programs/sackler-colloquia/completed_colloquia/agenda-science-communication-II.html.


**Grades**

Grades will be based on class participation (30%, including written comments on the readings and contributions to class discussions) and on the final paper (70%).

**Academic integrity**

Academic integrity is crucial to your personal scholarly identity. Your rights and responsibilities in this area are outlined in the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity: http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html.

Violations of the code of conduct include but are not limited to:

- Submitting work in this class that has also been submitted for a grade in another course without prior permission of both instructors.
• Using, obtaining, or providing unauthorized assistance on examinations, papers, or any other academic work.
• Misrepresenting another person's work as your own. You are responsible for obeying the Code of Academic Integrity. Ignorance of the code is not an excuse.

The most common problem for many students is plagiarism, which will not be tolerated and will be sanctioned by failure of the course. Students from cultures outside the United States should be especially aware that American standards of acknowledgement and use of material prepared by others (especially one's professors) can be much different than those in other cultures. More information about plagiarism is available at http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/index.cfm.

If you have any questions about how to interpret the Code in the context of assignments or activities in this class (especially any that involve collaboration with your colleagues), please feel free to contact the instructors or the University Ombudsman.

Tentative course schedule

23 January: Introduction

30 January: Three perspectives
Science of science communication

Social relations of science and media
• Rödder et al., Part I (Introduction)

Public engagement in science

6 February: Science of science communication, 1 (Sackler-I, some articles, some videos)
Keynote Talk

The Science of Science Communication I: What Do People Need to Know about Science?
• Trust in Scientists, Controversy Among Scientists, and American Public Opinion on Climate Change: How Attitude Formation and Change Unfolds. Jon Krosnick, Stanford University (26 mins)

The Science of Science Communication II: Developing Strategies for Effective and Trustworthy Communication

Annual Sackler Lecture
• Thinking That We Know, Daniel Kahneman, Princeton University

[13 February] No class

20 February: Science of science communication, 2 [Hepeng]
(Sackler-I papers and videos, day 2)
The Science of Science Communication III: Communication Dynamics in Socio-Political Contexts – How Science Is Presented and Understood in Modern Mass Cultures
• Effects of Mass Media on the Political Process: How Do Mass Media Shape the Nature of Public Debates About Science?, Matthew C. Nisbet, American University (24 mins)

The Science of Science Communication IV: Developing Organizational Infrastructures for Evidence-Based Communication about Science
• Building Organizational Infrastructures for Effective Communication: What Have We Learned from Experiences in the Corporate, Governmental, and Academic Worlds?, Ed Maibach, George Mason University (22 mins)
• Communication as an Empirical Endeavor: Why Is Systematic Evaluation So Rare and How Can We Make It the Norm?, Martin Storksdieck, National Research Council (23 mins)

25 February: Science of Science Communication, 3 [Carrie]
NEW READING:
• We will meet at Bruce’s house: 101 Oxford Place, just above Collegetown. Map is at http://goo.gl/maps/vVvXb, 7:30-9:30 pm
27 February: Social relations of science and media [Hang]
- Rödder et al., Part 2, Medialization of Science – Theoretical Considerations (ch. 2)
- Rödder et al., Part 3, Media Coverage of Science (chs. 3-6)
- Rödder et al., Part 4, Scientists’ Attitudes to Media Visibility (chs. 7-9)

6 March: Social relations of science and media [Hwangsuck]
- Rödder et al., Part 5, Organizational Responses to Media Expectations (chs. 10-13)
- Rödder et al., Part 6, Media Impact on Scholarly Communication (chs. 14-18)
- Rödder et al., Part 7, Conclusions (ch. 19)

13 March: Public engagement in science, 1 [Katie]
REVISED READINGS:

20 March: Public engagement in science, 2 [Merrill]
REVISED READINGS:
Selections TO BE DETERMINED from: S&EE special issue, engagement examples:


27 March: What counts as public engagement scholarship? [Becca]

SPRING BREAK

10 April: Compare & contrast

17 April: Paper topic presentations
  Last names M-Z [to be adjusted as necessary]

24 April: Paper topic presentations
  Last names A-L [to be adjusted as necessary]

1 May: Future directions

14 May (Wednesday): Final paper due [tentative]
DRAFT ASSIGNMENT: Course paper

As we will discuss in class, the paper for this course should be a literature-based exploration of a topic raised by one (or more – but a limited number) of the readings in the course.

Put another way: Take one of the readings that particular interests, excites, or infuriates you, follow the notes and references, and explicate the issues raised in the set of literature you explore.

Clearly, some of our readings might be lumped together. But the idea is to take one key idea and find out more about its antecedents. What assumptions are built into the argument? What broader argument is the paper a part of? Would the authors of cited articles agree with the way your author has used them? If so, what would they like about the extended argument? If not, how would they counter-argue?

Length: as long as necessary, and no longer. (I'm guessing most of you will find yourselves writing 10-20 pages, double-spaced.) Format: either footnotes or in-text references are fine. Use a standard reference system from your field (ask if you're not sure).