

Master in Political Ecology
Academic year: 2018-2019

Communicating research

Instructor:

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Objectives

This course will provide a real-world, insider view of how research is reported in the media. The objective is to challenge naive assumption, become aware of the forces and actors in place in defining how research is reported in the media, use this knowledge to plan an effective communication, and survey the most innovative opportunities and trends in research communication. The course will rely on published literature about the media, a variety of examples from the media, and personal experience of the teacher, including the results of the project PerCientEx, on good practices in science journalism. A large fraction of the course will be interactive and practic, including extended discussions with the students and a hands-on writing exercise.

Structure

The course is divided in four sessions: the first three will involve teaching and discussion and the fourth group work and discussion. The lessons should be self-explanatory, without the need of reading texts in advance, however a bibliography will be provided to those interested in entering in the details. In order to carry out the hands-on session, the students, teacher and coordinators of the master will decide together in advance which pieces of research will be used as examples in that session.

Evaluation

The evaluation will be carried out based on the individual participation in the group discussion throughout the course and on the group work in the hands-on session.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

Day 1 (3 hours) – Introduction to research in the media

The feedback loop between research and journalism. How the media influences research, and how the academic communication machinery shapes journalism. Biases and propaganda in research reporting. Framing and cultural cognition.

- *V. de Semir, C. Ribas, G. Revuelta, Press Releases of Science Journal Articles and Subsequent Newspaper Stories on the Same Topic, JAMA , 280:294-295 (1998)*
 - *S. Woloshin, L. M. Schwartz, Translating Research Into News, JAMA, 287:2856-2858 (2002)*
 - *F. Colombo, Ultimas noticias sobre el periodismo, Anagrama (1998)*
 - *M. Pérez Oliva, Valor añadido de la comunicación científica, Quark, 10 (1998)*
 - *A. Williams et al., The quality and independence of British Journalism, Cardiff University report (2008)*
 - *N. Davies, Flat Earth News, Vintage Books (2008)*
 - *G. Brumfiel, Science Journalism: supplanting the old media? Nature (2009)*
 - *B. Rensberger, Science Journalism: too close for comfort. Nature (2009)*
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Day 2 (2 hours) – Trends and innovation in reporting research in the media (Gallery of examples)

Best practices in science journalism as per the PerCientEx project. Trends and innovation in reporting on research: collaborative journalism, data journalism, gamification, sensor journalism, narrative journalism and new narratives, etc. Paths into research journalism.

- *10 best practice guidelines for reporting science & health stories, Science Media Center*
 - *Criterios de “Health News Review”*
 - *Statement of Principles of the Association of Health Care Journalists*
 - *A manifesto for the simple scribe – my 25 commandments for journalists, Tim Radford (The Guardian)*
 - *Global Investigative Journalism Casebook, UNESCO*
 - *A Field Guide for Science Writers, NASW*
 - *Periodismo Innovador en América Latina, Knight Center*
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Day 3 (2 hours) – Tips and tricks in writing about research

Inverted pyramids. Structures of journalistic texts on research. Effective sentences, language and metaphores.

- *David Randall, The Universal Journalist, Pluto Press*
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Day 4 (3 hours) – Evaluation: writing a press release on a piece of research in political ecology

The students will work in groups. Each group will read a piece of research in political ecology and produce a draft press release addressed to the media. The press releases will be projected and discussed together.