

**BSC 280 – Communicating Science to the Public – Syllabus
Fall 2017 - Department of Biological Sciences - Marshall University**

Course Title/Number	Special Topics: Communicating Science to the Public / BSC 120
Semester/Year	Fall 2017
Days/Time	Mondays and Wednesdays 1:00 – 1:50 pm
Location	S-360
Instructor	Dr. Nadja Spitzer
Office	315 Science Building, inside S-311A
Phone	304-696-7147
E-Mail	spitzern@marshall.edu
Office Hours	Tuesday & Thursday 11:00am – 1:00pm, or by appointment. *I make every effort to keep scheduled office hours. Please note that conflicts requiring my absence may arise.
University Policies	By enrolling in this course, you agree to the University Policies listed below. Please read the full text of each policy by going to www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs and clicking on “Marshall University Policies.” Or, you can access the policies directly by going to www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs/policies/ . Academic Dishonesty/Excused Absence Policy for Undergraduates/Computing Services Acceptable Use/Inclement Weather/Dead Week/Students with Disabilities/Academic Forgiveness/Academic Probation and Suspension/Academic Rights and Responsibilities of Students/Affirmative Action/Sexual Harassment

Course Description:

2 credit hrs. Analysis, discussion and practice of effective methods of communicating scientific information to a non-science audience. Open to all science majors.

The table below shows the following relationships: How each student learning outcome will be practiced and assessed in the course.

Course student learning outcomes	How students will practice each outcome in this course	How student achievement of each outcome will be assessed in this course
Students will identify the challenges of science communication.	Discussion in lectures, selected readings.	Various assignments throughout the term.
Students will analyze examples of scientific communication to identify effective mechanisms.	Discussion in lectures, analysis of mainstream science reporting in various media. Class blog critiques.	Various assignments throughout the term.
Students will practice science writing for the public.	Writing of several blog entries.	Several blog entries throughout term.
Students will evaluate practical aspects of mainstream scientific communication.	Discussions or Q/A sessions with persons employed as science communicators.	Various assignments throughout the term.
Students will integrate concepts to develop a science education project.	Discussion in lectures, online practice with LearnSmart on Connect, textbook readings, weekly laboratory activities.	Final Project.

Required Texts, Additional Reading, and Other Materials

Computer Requirements: Access to MUOnline is required. I use MUOnline to distribute material for my classes, supplementary material or exercises, and additional material you may find interesting. I may send messages to your Marshall email account, you are expected to check it regularly. Any electronic course communication must be from your Marshall email account (not gmail, yahoo, MUOnline, etc). Do not email me inside MUOnline; always use the address above. In most cases, I will reply to messages within 2 business days. If you enter into an email conversation with me, I expect you to check for answers and reply promptly.

Course Requirements/Due Dates

1. Various reading and writing assignments will be given throughout the term. There will also be unannounced in-class quizzes on these assignments.
2. Blog entries will be due **Sep 17** and **Oct 15**. Blog comments will be due **Sep 24** and **Oct 22**.
3. Final Project Due Dates: Preliminary proposal: **Oct 23**
Final proposal: **Nov 6**
Completed project: **Dec 4** (all at the beginning of class).

Grading Policy

I will calculate your final grade using the following weights:

Informal writing, quizzes, and assignments throughout the term:	30%
Blogs and blog comments:	20%
Final Project:	30%
Herd Science Presentation:	10%
Participation in class discussions and activities	10%
Total:	100%

Final grades are determined using this scale: 100-90 = A; 89-80 = B; 79-70 = C; 69-60 = D; <59 = F. I round up if your score is X.5 to X.9. I do not give bonus points or extra credit.

Calculating grades requires basic algebra that you should be able to do, considering the prerequisites for this course. Every score you earn on quizzes and exams will be posted on MuOnline or Connect so that you can calculate your current grade at any time. I will not calculate grades for you throughout the semester. If you need a refresher, the math tutoring center should be able to help you, or you are welcome at my office hours for help. There are also many resources online to help you with this skill.

Attendance Policy

As this is a discussion- and activity-based class, your regular attendance is crucial to your success. You are expected to be present and on time for all class meetings. It is your responsibility to be familiar with the University Class Attendance Policy, which can be found in the 2016-2017 Undergraduate Catalog (page 87) or at this web address: <http://www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs/policies/>. You are expected to make up any work missed due to an excused absence, you must contact me as soon as possible to discuss a plan for making up missed work.

You will receive a warning after two unexcused absences. If you miss a third class without an excuse you will receive an automatic one letter grade deduction in the course. I will require you to meet with me to discuss your standing and develop a plan of improvement. If you meet its criteria, you may be able to earn back the letter grade deduction. If you have a fourth unexcused absence, the previous letter grade deduction stands, regardless of improvement plan results. Subsequent unexcused absences will result in an additional letter grade deduction for each absence.

If absences, excused or not, result in a significant proportion of total classwork missed, you will receive a recommendation for withdrawal from the course.

Personal Conduct

I will expect everyone to act in a professional and courteous manner. Disruptive, abusive, or offensive behavior directed at anyone involved in the class will not be tolerated, and offenders may be asked to leave the classroom and forfeit any associated grades. Cell phones and other communication devices should be turned off or set to silent ring. If you absolutely must answer a phone call, quietly leave the class before doing so. Text messaging is not allowed. Use of computers or personal electronic devices is not allowed, unless their use is directly involved with class activities **and** has been approved by me. If you are late, enter quietly and avoid disturbing the class. Any disruptive behavior, including but not limited to talking, reading other material in class, texting, or cell phone use, will result in the offender being required to leave the class and forfeiture of any associated grades. Furthermore, I only respond to emails that are written with professionalism and courtesy.

Academic Honesty

I take honesty and integrity seriously, and will not tolerate any form of dishonest conduct. You are responsible for knowing the University's policies, which can be found in the student handbook or at this web address:

<http://www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs/policies/>

During exams, I will expect you to NOT look at the work of those sitting around you, or have any form of course related material or electronic devices either on or in view. In the lab, most experiments will be done in groups, but I expect that all assignments will be written up independently. Exceptions to independent work will only be allowed in cases where you are expressly instructed to write up your assignment in groups. I also expect that all references used in your reports be properly cited. Any incidence of dishonest conduct will result in a grade of ZERO for that test, quiz, or assignment, and possible failure or dismissal from the course. Every case will also be referred to Academic Affairs for further action. I do not allow for-profit note-taking in my classes.

An important note on plagiarism: Plagiarism is any use, whether intentional or not, of another person's words in your assignments. This includes the use of quotes to indicate borrowed words - using quotes is not done in scientific writing and is not allowed in this class. I am interested in how you can express your thoughts, not that you can copy someone else's. Safeassign, a plagiarism detection tool, will be used in this class.

Students taking this class must agree to submit their written work to Safeassign for review.

Social Justice

Absolutely NO student will be discriminated against based on race, ethnicity, sex, age, sexual orientation, social class, health condition, or religion. Every student is an integral and essential member of this class, and their opinions and discussion will be treated with value and respect.

Students with Disabilities

Marshall University is committed to equal opportunity in education for all students, including those with physical, learning and psychological disabilities. University policy states that it is the responsibility of students with disabilities to contact the Office of Disability Services in Prichard Hall 117, phone 304 696-2467 to provide documentation of their disability. Following this, the office will send a letter to each of the student's instructors outlining the academic accommodation he/she will need to ensure equality in classroom experiences, outside assignment, testing and grading. The instructor and student will meet to discuss how the accommodation(s) requested will be provided. For more information, please visit <http://www.marshall.edu/disabled> or contact the Office of Disability Services at Prichard Hall 117, phone 304-696-2467.