UCL SUMMER SCHOOL

SCIENCE JOURNALISM

Key Information

Module code  ISSU0068
Taught during  Session One: Monday 1 July - Friday 19 July 2019
Module workload  45 teaching hours plus approximately 100 study hours
Module leader  Dr Jean-Baptiste Gouyon
Department  Department of Science & Technology Studies, Faculty of Mathematical & Physical Sciences
Credit  15 UCL credits, 7.5 ECTS, 4 US
Level  Level 2, second year undergraduate
Pre-requisites  Standard entry requirements
Assessment  Blog/podcast (25%), Feature article (75%)

Module Overview
Science and innovation are playing a central part in developed societies, with scientists being increasingly seen as key economic actors. Informed science journalism is more necessary than ever, if our societies are to develop as sustainable democracies. This module considers key aspects of news writing and offers participants the possibility to experiment practically with the production of different genres of journalistic output: News story, feature article, blog post, and podcast. For the latter, students will have access to the radio studio installed in the Science and Technology Studies department. The module’s practical approach invites students to reflect on the role of science journalists in today’s society. By the end of the module, participants will have produced contents that will be featured on a dedicated webpage.

Week One
- When Science becomes News. What is science journalism?
- Writing for the news I: What goes into a headline? The inverted pyramid.
- Finding good stories out I: Sources of information for the news desk journalist
- Pitching a story

Week Two
- Convergence: producing content for web based media
- Blogging
- Podcasting
- Vlogging

Week Three
- Journalism is the art of asking questions. The interview

Please note that this module description is indicative and may be subject to change.
• Finding good stories out II: Reportage and field work
• Writing for the news II: Telling stories to inform
• Writing a profile

Module Aims
This is a skills based module. It aims to introduce students to key techniques of news writing with a focus on reporting about science and innovation. The course is also intended to emphasise the necessity and value of science journalism in today’s developed democracies, and to foster a reflection the forms science journalism can take nowadays. On a practical level, the module will enable participants to produce actual journalistic content, the best of which will be featured on a dedicated webpage for the course. This course is time intensive. Modules participants will be expected to work on their writing outside class.

Teaching Methods
Each four-hour session will be structured around roughly one-hour lecture-type content and 3 hours of practical work with formative feedback provided along the way.

Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of this module, students will:
• Understand how news content is produced
• Know how to write and produce a variety of news contents
• Be able to plan a reportage
• Be able to conduct an interview
• Appreciate the importance and value of science journalism

Assessment Methods
• 600-word blog or 6-minute podcast (25%)
• Final examination (75%)

Module Leader
Dr Jean-Baptiste Gouyon is a Lecturer in Science Communication at UCL Science and Technology Studies department. Jean-Baptiste was initially trained as a biologist, after which he went on to work as a science journalist in France, first as a desk writer for a children popular science magazine Science & Vie Découvertes. He then worked at the French Embassy in Norway, during which time he produced a weekly science segment for the morning programme on the French Radio in Oslo. After returning to France he was freelance science journalist for a few years, with articles appearing in such high profile magazines as La Recherche and Science et Vie. In 2010 he received a PhD in Sociology from the University of York. His research is on the presentation of science in visual media, principally film and television. In 2017, UCL students nominated Jean-Baptiste for the Outstanding Teaching Award.

Key Texts


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