



# HPSC0044

## Science and the Publishing Industry

### Syllabus

v1

Session	2024-25
Web	<a href="http://profjoecain.net/0044">profjoecain.net/0044</a>
Moodle	<a href="http://profjoecain.net/0044moodle">profjoecain.net/0044moodle</a>
Timetable	<a href="http://profjoecain.net/0044time">profjoecain.net/0044time</a>
ReadingList	<a href="http://profjoecain.net/0044read">profjoecain.net/0044read</a>

### 1. Description

The publishing industry is enormous. It shapes science communication in fundamental ways. This module investigates publishing. How does it work? How does it enable, constrain, and challenge science communication? The module covers a wide range of outputs: trade books, textbooks, peer review journals, and ancillary products. It examines topics every publisher needs to know about, as well as contexts key for interpreting trends. How does marketing and selling shape communication products? What careers are available in science publishing? In recent years, major changes in the industry have been nothing short of revolutionary: open access, print-on-demand, automated translations, tablet reading, data publishing and data mining, and more. The module also will integrate key STS themes to the subject: how do they help us better understand science publishing. The module will ask students to develop practical projects, including a book proposal, a product pitch, and a print-ready book manuscript, which could be published. They also will have opportunities to meet professionals in the industry.

CURRENT DISPLAY		CHANGE DISPLAY		View as list		Print				
SELECTED MODULES		CURRENT VIEW: ACADEMIC YEAR BETWEEN 26/08/2024 - 24/08/2025 CURRENT WEEK								
	9:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	13:00	14:00	15:00	16:00	17:00	18:00
MON							Lecture HPSC0044-A7P-T2 Science and the Publishing Industry CAIN, Joe (Prof) Gordon Square (26) B32 21-25, 27-31			
TUE										
WED			Lecture HPSC0044-A6U-T2 Science and the Publishing Industry CAIN, Joe (Prof) Gordon Square (26) B32 21-25, 27-31							
THU										
FRI										

Timetable as of 13 December 2024. **M** sessions are coded as A7P-T2. || **UG** sessions are coded as A6U-T2. Check for any changes: <[profjoecain.net/0044time](http://profjoecain.net/0044time)>

## 2. Key information

HPSC0044 combines postgraduate and undergraduate offers.  
Different times. Different work. Different assignments. Different excitement.

### 2.1 **UG** Undergraduate (level 6) key information

#### UG assignment

Percentage	Due (17:00)	Submit
0%	12 Feb	sketch (500 words)
0%	26 Feb	proposal pitch (5 minute film) (compulsory)
100%	26 Mar	book proposal (3000 words) using form provided

## 2.2 M Masters (level 7) key information

### M assignment

Percentage	Due	Submit
0%	25 Feb 9:00	status report (5 minute film) (compulsory)
100%	26 Mar 17:00	analysis (3000 words)

## 2.3 who attends which class hours?

This module combines an undergraduate and postgraduate offer.

- **UG**: Undergraduate students are *required to attend* the level 6 sessions each week
- **M**: Postgraduate students are *required to attend* the level 7 sessions each week

**M** students are welcome to sit-in on **UG** sessions.

## 3. Module tutor

Module tutor	Professor Joe Cain
Contact	J.Cain@ucl.ac.uk   t: 020 7679 3041 (office)
Web	<a href="http://ucl.ac.uk/sts/cain">ucl.ac.uk/sts/cain</a>   <a href="http://profjoecain.net">profjoecain.net</a>
Office location	22 Gordon Square, Room 4.3
Office hours (T2)	via Teams: Thursdays 13:00-17:00 book using <a href="http://profjoecain.net/meet">profjoecain.net/meet</a> via in-person: Mondays 11:00-12:30 drop-in at my office

## 4. Aims and objectives

### 4.1 aims

This module aims to introduce students to publishing as an industry, focusing on the development, production, marketing, and distribution of science trade books and peer-review STEM journals. It aims to relate this activity to fundamental themes in science communication and STS. The impact of major changes in the industry – e.g., open access, print-on-demand, automated translations, and tablet reading – will be examined, too. The module aims to dissect the industry and expose students to some of the many possible entry-level positions and career trajectories available within the industry. With such knowledge and understanding, students can consider how they might best become involved in the industry, and later develop it towards improving science communication overall. The module will ask students to develop practical skills through the creation of practical projects, including (for **UG** students) a book proposal and product pitch, and (for **M** students) an industry consultation.

### 4.2 objectives

By the end of this module, students should be able to:

1. identify major elements of the publishing industry involving the development, production, marketing, and distribution of science books and peer-review journals
2. relate book and journal publishing to fundamental themes in science communication and STS
3. describe major recent changes in the industry – e.g., open access, print-on-demand, automated translations, and tablet reading – and discuss possible impacts
4. describe entry-level positions and career trajectories available within the industry
5. reflect on how they might best become involved in the industry and later improve science communication overall
6. develop practical projects, meeting specifications with accuracy and flair

## 5. Module plan

Student responsibilities in this module involve three components: class sessions, assignments, and independent learning. The structure is different for **UG** and **M** students.

### 5.1 class sessions

This module has twenty hours for in-class sessions, booked through the central timetable ([profjoecain.net/0044time](http://profjoecain.net/0044time)).

Each week is themed. A preliminary schedule is provided below. Additions and revisions will be made on Moodle during the session. The aim is to post all materials for a week's activities by Thursday noon of the preceding week.

Students will be expected to complete all *required* activities prior to the indicated session. Supplemental or recommended activities are *optional* and need not be completed prior to the indicated session. The purpose of supplemental material is to enhance and broaden engagement with a topic for those who seek it. This could assist with elements of the assessment. It also simply adds to the general learning aims for the module. Students also are encouraged to add supplemental materials of their own choice. Introduce these to the Moodle Forum.

### 5.2 assessment

#### **UG**: undergraduate assignments

Assessment	100%	coursework: book proposal (3000 words)
Essential texts	Clark, Giles, and Angus Phillips. 2019. <i>Inside Book Publishing. Sixth Edition</i> (London: Routledge). ISBN 9781351265720. <a href="#">UCL Library</a> . Plus additionally assigned readings.	

Assessment focuses on one project, produced through individual work, and consists of one final paper preceded by two items of formative work. In brief, the project requires students to develop, produce, market, and plan for the distribution of a book of their own design, within certain constraints. Criteria for assessment will be posted on the Moodle site and will be discussed in class well in advance of the deadline.

In sum, the **UG** coursework includes:

1. **sketch** (formative) - The aim is to produce an initial concept and outline for their project, sketching the plan for content and market. The goal is to ensure students are on the right track.

2. **pitch** (formative - 5 minutes) - The aim is to pitch your book project and convince commissioners to give you a “green light”. The goal is to offer additional feedback and to give students experience with in-person presentation.
3. **full book proposal** (100% - 3000 words) - The aim is to produce a viable book proposal suitable for submission to a trade publisher. This will speak to key elements of publishing, including development, production, marketing, and distribution.

## M: postgraduate assignments

Assessment	100%	coursework: SWOT analysis (3000 words)
Essential texts	<p>Clark, Giles, and Angus Phillips. 2019. <i>Inside Book Publishing. Sixth Edition</i> (London: Routledge). ISBN 9781351265720. <a href="#">UCL Library</a>.</p> <p>Morris, Sally (et al). 2013. <i>The Handbook of Journal Publishing. Sixth Edition</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). ISBN 9781107653603. <a href="#">UCL Library</a>.</p> <p>Plus additionally assigned readings.</p>	

Assessment focuses on one project, produced through individual work, and consists of one item of assessed coursework preceded by two items of formative work. In brief, the project requires students to produce a SWOT analysis for a current publisher. Criteria for assessment will be posted on the Moodle site and will be discussed in class well in advance of the deadline.

In sum, the **M** coursework includes:

1. **status report** (formative - 5 minute film) - The aim is to report on progress in the project, identifying initial successes and areas of difficulty. The goals are to ensure students are making good progress and to identify problems in need of solution well before the project due date.
2. **full research report** (100% - 3000 words) - The aim is to produce a SWOT analysis suitable for submission to a client.

## 5.3 independent learning

As with most HPSC modules, HPSC0044 expects students to dedicate no fewer than 60 hours during the term, approximately 6 hours per week, to independent study and skill development towards module objectives. Students rarely make good use of the tremendous range of assets UCL makes available for independent learning. This module will use the Moodle site to direct students towards some valuable digital and print resources they can use for independent learning, but students are expected to press farther by researching topics on their own initiative. UCL Science Library has a section dedicated to publishing, and UCL e-journals include a subscription to *Publishers Weekly*. Or, a fair number of podcasts are available relating to the publishing industry and its many parts. Publishing requires a wide range of technical skills, such as Excel or InDesign, and self-guided training is available through [LinkedIn Learning](#), for which UCL holds a subscription. Students are expected to show initiative with self-development; this is a commonplace expectation in business.

## 6. Programme for undergraduates (level 6)

### UG schedule

This list of weekly themes is indicative and may change.

#### 1. what do authors do? (w/c 13Jan) (UCL Week 20)

UG	what do authors do?	explore <a href="#">Adam Rutherford</a> explore <a href="#">Gemma Milne</a>
XT		Clark and Phillips (2020: ch1,6)

#### 2. what do publishers do? (w/c 20Jan) (UCL Week 21)

UG	what do editors do?	Clark and Phillips (2020: ch7,8)
----	---------------------	----------------------------------

#### 3. what's marketing? (w/c 27Jan) (UCL Week 22)

UG	what's marketing? what use is metadata?	Clark and Phillips (2020: ch10) Umstadd (2020)
----	--	---

#### 4. what's promotion? (w/c 03Feb) (UCL Week 23)

UG	Bookstore visit - FIELDWORK what do booksellers do?	Clark and Phillips (2020: ch11,13)
----	--	------------------------------------

#### 5. what adds extra value? (w/c 10Feb) (UCL Week 24)

UG	platforms and agents	Thompson (Thompson, 2012: ch 2) Clark and Phillips (2020: ch12)
XT	integrations	Clark and Phillips (2020: ch6)

#### reading week (w/c 17Feb)

ALL	no sessions this week	
-----	-----------------------	--

#### 6. publishing is an ecosystem (w/c 24Feb) (UCL Week 26)

UG	design and production	Clark and Phillips (2020: ch9)
XT	other niches?	Cochran (Cochran, 2022) Clark and Phillips (2020: ch5) Explore <a href="#">Reedsy.com</a>

**7. proposals and prepublication (w/c 03Mar) (UCL Week 27)**

UG	sharpening the proposals and boosting prepublication	Clark and Phillips (2020: ch9)
XT		Clark and Phillips (2020: ch3,4)

**8. is it legal? (w/c 10Mar) (UCL Week 28)**

UG	IP and rights management	UCL (2023) Clark and Phillips (2020: ch11)
----	--------------------------	---

**EXTRA London Book Fair visit (13 Mar)**

UG	<b>STS DAY</b> at London Book Fair	Location: London Olympia ask about STS tickets
----	------------------------------------	---

**9. inclusion (w/c 17Mar) (UCL Week 29)**

UG	inclusion and diversity	Lee & Low Books (2020) Clark and Phillips (2020: ch14)
XT		Baverstock (2019: ch15)

**10. is it my future? (w/c 24Mar) (UCL Week 30)**

UG	publishing and controversy	Smith (2016) Flood (2021) UCL (2018)
----	----------------------------	--

## UG assignment: ThinkSTS

Welcome to the literary agency, ThinkSTS. As one of our new Associates, your first independent assignment is to plan a new book; specifically, to develop a new project that showcases some of main principles of science and technology studies. The agency's Project Directors expect you to develop a full proposal by the end of this term, and they've set several milestones for you to demonstrate your progress.



1. draft prospectus (formative) - The aim is to produce an initial concept and outline for their project, sketching the plan for content and market. The goal is to ensure you are on the right track.
2. proposal pitch (formative - 5 minutes) - The aim is to pitch your proposal to Project Directors to convince them to "green light" your project. You're speaking on behalf of ThinkSTS, so be professional.
3. book proposal (100% - 3000 words) - The aim is to produce a viable book proposal suitable for submission to a trade publisher. This will speak to key elements of publishing, including content, production, marketing, and distribution. By design, the full proposal may include revised elements of the draft prospectus. The tutor will provide you with the publisher's proposal form to use for the full proposal.

Importantly, your project *develops a proposal, not an actual completed book*. Thus, you are allowed a large degree of creative licence, provided this is accompanied by supportive research and justification. Proposal writing is a form of speculative development.

If you have a creative block, you can use one of the texts available in the assessment section of Moodle. ThinkSTS wants to develop a series called "Classics in History of Science". These titles are on the list for the first set. You can use one of these titles for this project.

Please keep a research notebook as evidence of your work.

## 1. sketch

For the draft prospectus, write a 2-page, 500-word memo to the Project Directors describing enough of the following elements to give them a general understanding of your idea:

1. title
2. contents (chapter list and summaries)
3. proposed readership and market
4. marketing ideas

Note: You will notice this list draws from Clark and Phillips (2020: 141-142). You will not know the full details of each section at this stage.

## 2. proposal pitch

The Project Directors want to see your pitch skills before you meet real commissioning editors, so they've asked you to prepare a 5-minute project pitch for their next meeting. You can assume they've read your preliminary proposal. They want to hear about the project's highlights, hooks, audiences, and marketing plan. They also want to see your front-running idea for a cover design.

Prepare a 5-minute presentation for the Project Directors as though you are pitching to commissioning editors.

## 3. full book proposal

At this point, you've convinced the Project Directors your idea has potential. They next ask you to create a full book proposal. A specific proposal form will be made available for you to complete. You may incorporate into the full book proposal any of the material you used for the draft prospectus and the pitch. The Project Directors expect your full proposal not to exceed 3000 words, exclusive of notes, appendices, and the existing text on the blank form. The Project Directors also expect it to represent professional-level work ready to submit to publishers.

## 4. additional information

Submission time is set at 17:00 London time.

Further guidance will be provided on Moodle and will be discussed during in-class sessions. Please take the initiative to raise your questions with the tutor, ideally during class or in office hours.

Criteria for assessment are described in separate documents and presented in films on Moodle.

If you use GenAI for idea generation, be sure to replace bland text and generic materials with dynamic and strong creative content. Make your text sing in your voice.



## 7. Programme for Masters (level 7)

### M schedule

This list of weekly themes is indicative and may change.

#### 1. what's a journal? (w/c 13Jan) (UCL Week 20)

M	what's a journal?	Morris (2013: ch1)
M	trends	PA data (see Moodle)
XT		Bell and Owen (2017)

#### 2. what do editors do? (w/c 20Jan) (UCL Week 21)

M	editors	Morris (2013: ch3)
XT		Thompson (2012: ch8) Morris (2013: ch2)

#### 3. who controls quality? (w/c 27Jan) (UCL Week 22)

M	peer review	Browse your Publisher's guidance Browse PeerCommunityIn
---	-------------	--

#### 4. who pays? (w/c 03Feb) (UCL Week 23)

M	open access and transformative agreements	explore UCL Open Access UCL (2022) Hinchliffe (2019)
M	marketing and sales	Morris (2013: ch6,8)

#### 5. what adds extra value? (w/c 10Feb) (UCL Week 24)

M	mining and smelting	Umstattd (2020) Leonelli (2016: ch1) Morris (2013: ch9)
XT	conglomeration	Hinchliffe (2022)

#### reading week (w/c 17Feb)

M	no sessions this week	
---	-----------------------	--

#### 6. how is success measured? (w/c 24Feb) (UCL Week 26)

M	metrics and markets	Petrou (2022) Morris (2013: ch5)
---	---------------------	-------------------------------------

### 7. what are predators? (w/c 03Mar) (UCL Week 27)

M	predators	Explore Beall's List and wiki Petrou (2020, 2022)
---	-----------	---

### 8. is it legal? (w/c 10Mar) (UCL Week 28)

M	contracts, IP, legal	UCL (2023) contract samples on Moodle Morris (2013: ch11,12)
---	----------------------	--

### EXTRA London Book Fair visit (13 Mar)

M	<b>STS DAY</b> at London Book Fair	Location: London Olympia ask about STS tickets
---	------------------------------------	---

### 9. Industry SWOT (w/c 17Mar) (UCL Week 29)

M	industry overview	Clark and Phillips (2020: ch3,4)
---	-------------------	----------------------------------

### 10. publishing ecosystem (w/c 24Mar) (UCL Week 30)

M	inclusion and diversity futures	Lee & Low Books (2020) Morris (2013: ch13)
---	------------------------------------	---

## M assignment: ThinkSTS

ThinkSTS started as a literary agency. It has expanded to include consultancy work and forecasting for the publishing industry. They've hired you to undertake research and project work. Welcome to the agency.



As your first assignment with ThinkSTS, the owner has asked you to prepare material for an evidence-based SWOT analysis for one of the publishers listed below. The purpose of this analysis is to aid their strategic review on how to adapt their business for competing over the next 10 years.

The publishers are:

1. The Royal Society
2. National Academies Press
3. IOP Publishing
4. The Lancet Group

You'll be assigned the publisher by email from the module tutor. You may work with others as a collaboration, but the analysis you submit must be your own, custom work.

Please keep a research notebook as evidence of your work.

### 1. status report

Submit a 5-minute film reporting your progress to date, highlighting any problems or questions you're encountering. The audience for your film is your boss, and the expectation is that this will be an informal presentation you might otherwise give in a face-to-face, in-person session. This is formative work, used to give you feedback for focusing the final analysis.

## 2. full analysis

The analysis you submit should be a professional presentation of your evidence-based research. Your report title should identify the publisher and the SWOT category options researched. An <200 word “executive summary” should identify the key points you want to make (not included in the word count).

## 3. additional information

Submission time is set at 17:00 London time.

Further guidance will be provided on Moodle and will be discussed during in-class sessions. Please take the initiative to raise your questions with the tutor, ideally during class or in office hours.

Criteria for assessment are described in separate documents and presented in films on Moodle.

If you use GenAI for idea generation, be sure to replace bland text and generic materials with dynamic and strong creative content. Make your text sing in your voice.

## 8. Important policy information

Refer to the [STS Student Handbook](#). We follow the rules of that handbook.

### 8.1 Using GenAI

UCL provides guidance for “[Three Categories of GenAI Use in Assessment](#)”. This module has a **Category 2** rating regarding use of AI tools. I encourage you to explore their value, especially for idea generation and comparison. If you use GenAI in your project, add an appendix in which you list those tools used and reflect on their strengths and weaknesses for this project. This appendix is not included in the word count.

### 8.2 Extensions and mitigations

This is a long-term project, and time management is a learning objective. Information about extensions and mitigations is provided in the [STS Student Handbook](#). Individual tutors cannot grant extensions on their own initiative, so please do not ask. STS respects all SORAs, ECs, and DAPs approved elsewhere in the university; normally, these are communicated to STS automatically.

### 8.3 Project feedback

Your feedback and first marks on coursework will be accessible via Moodle, normally four weeks (20 working days) after the submission date. We aim to give formative feedback sooner, normally two weeks. Please note that first marks are provisional and might change after second marking and moderation by external examiners. Marks are confirmed and fixed in summer at the STS Board of Examiners.

Please focus on the feedback provided by the first marker. This is provided to help you improve in future work. You should discuss all your feedback with your personal tutor with the aim of identifying weaknesses and possible routes for improvement.

### 8.4 Course communications

Communications from the module tutor will use several paths:

- Moodle Announcements: the principal means for communications in this module.  
*Hint:* You can set Moodle to “digest” communications (collecting all notices sent in one day into a single email sent once per day). I find “digest” helps keep me organized and avoids disruption hour-to-hour in my day.
- If I have a matter for you specifically, I will communicate via your UCL email address. I don’t use other email addresses. I’ll put “0044” in the subject line to help you filter.
- Hint: If you want help managing email using filters, see UCL IS’s “how-to” guides: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/how-to-guides>

If you need to communicate with the module tutor, use email in the first instance. See contact details at the front of the syllabus.

## 9. Readings

This module makes heavy use of three books (two for **UG** and two for **M**) as required readings, with a variety of additional sources as either required or recommended. Students will be expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of these texts in their assessments. ReadingLists@UCL has access routes to all required materials <[profjoecain.net/0044read](mailto:profjoecain.net/0044read)>. Below is a list of materials cited in the schedule.

- BAVERSTOCK, A. & BOWEN, S. 2019. *How to Market Books. Sixth Edition*, New York, Routledge.
- BELL, E. & OWEN, T. 2017. *The Platform Press: How Silicon Valley Reengineered Journalism*, New York, Columbia Journalism School; Tow Centre for Digital Journalism.
- CLARK, G. & PHILLIPS, A. 2020. *Inside Book Publishing. Sixth Edition*, London, Routledge.
- COCHRAN, A. 2022. *The Beginning of the End of Publisher-Society Partner Contracts | The Scholarly Kitchen* [Online]. Available: <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2022/10/24/the-beginning-of-the-end-of-publisher-society-partner-contracts/> [Accessed].
- FLOOD, A. 2021. 'If publishers become afraid, we're in trouble': publishing's cancel culture debate boils over. *The Guardian*.
- HINCHLIFFE, L. J. 2019. *Transformative Agreements: A Primer | The Scholarly Kitchen* [Online]. Available: <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2019/04/23/transformative-agreements/> [Accessed].
- HINCHLIFFE, L. J. 2022. *Elsevier's ScienceDirect as Content Supercontinent? | The Scholarly Kitchen* [Online]. Available: <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2022/01/18/sciencedirect-as-content-supercontinent/> [Accessed].
- LEE\_ &\_ LOW\_BOOKS, JIMÉNEZ, L. M. & BECKERT, B. 2020. *Where is the Diversity in Publishing? The 2019 Diversity Baseline Survey Results* [Online]. Available: <https://blog.leeandlow.com/2020/01/28/2019diversitybaselinesurvey/> [Accessed].
- LEONELLI, S. 2016. *Data-Centric Biology: A Philosophical Study*, Chicago, IL, University of Chicago Press.
- MORRIS, S., BARNAS, E., LAFRENIER, D. & REICH, M. 2013. *The Handbook of Journal Publishing*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- PETROU, C. 2020. *MDPI's Remarkable Growth | The Scholarly Kitchen* [Online]. Available: <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2020/08/10/guest-post-mdpis-remarkable-growth/> [Accessed].
- PETROU, C. 2022. *Publishing Fast and Slow: A Review of Publishing Speed in the Last Decade | The Scholarly Kitchen* [Online]. Society for Scholarly Publishers. Available: <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2022/11/08/guest-post-publishing-fast-and-slow-a-review-of-publishing-speed-in-the-last-decade/> [Accessed].
- SMITH, D. 2016. *Sci-Hub: How Does it Work? | The Scholarly Kitchen* [Online]. Available: <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2016/02/25/sci-hub-how-does-it-work/> [Accessed].
- THOMPSON, J. B. 2012. *Merchants of Culture. 2nd edition*, Cambridge, Polity.
- UCL. 2018. *University College London Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech* [Online]. Available: [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/sites/srs/files/ucl\\_code\\_of\\_practice\\_on\\_freedom\\_of\\_speech.pdf](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/sites/srs/files/ucl_code_of_practice_on_freedom_of_speech.pdf) [Accessed].
- UCL 2022. *Open Science: a practical guide for PhD students*, London, UCL.
- UCL. 2023. *Intellectual Property Policy: guidance relating to student IP* [Online]. UCL. Available: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/enterprise/about/governance-and-policies/intellectual-property-ip-policy/intellectual-property-policy-guidance> [Accessed].

UMSTATTD, T. 2020. *How to Use Metadata to Sell More Books, with Joshua Tallent* [Online].  
Available: <https://www.authormedia.com/meta-data/> [Accessed].