HPSC0152 Science Communication and Social Justice

(Science Communication in Practice)

Course Syllabus

2023-24 session | Dr Simon Lock & Dr Stephen Hughes | simon.lock@ucl.ac.uk
stephen.hughes@ucl.ac.uk

Course Information

In this module we will bring together the critical skills gained in the first two core modules around scientific content and engagement and apply them in practice. The module will be focused around building your skills in practical communication and engagement situated in a critical and social justice framework.

Basic course information

Course website:	See Moodle
Moodle Web site:	Search "HPSC0152"
Assessment:	100% Coursework: 30% Engagement Project video pitch, 30% Engagement Project report, 40% Science communication product
Timetable:	Term 2, Thursday, 11am-1pm
Prerequisites:	None
Required texts:	See syllabus & Moodle
Course tutor(s):	Dr Simon Lock and Dr Stephen Hughes
Contact:	simon.lock@ucl.ac.uk	stephen.hughes@ucl.ac.uk
Web:	https://www.ucl.ac.uk/sts/people/dr-simon-lock
Office location:	22 Gordon Square, room 2.2 (Simon) room 3.3
Office hours	Simon: Tuesday 2-3pm (in person) and Wednesdays 2-3pm (online) Stephen: Thursdays 1-3pm

Schedule

Week	Topic	Date	Preparation Activity
1	Intro: Situated Science Communication for Social Justice	11 Jan 2024	Essential readings
2	Designing Engagement: Aims and Objectives	18 Jan 2024	Worksheets on Moodle
3	Designing Engagement: Audiences	25 Jan 2024	Worksheets on Moodle
4	Designing Engagement: Activities	1 Feb 2024	Worksheets on Moodle
5	Designing Engagement: Evaluation	8 Feb 2024	Worksheets on Moodle
	READING WEEK		
6	Bringing it altogether: critically informed engagement	22 Feb 2024	
7	Designing content: Press releases	29 Feb 2024	
8	Designing content: Data visualisation	07 Mar 2024	
9	Designing content: Fiction/speculative fictions	14 Mar 2024	
10	Pulling it all together	21 Mar 2024	
	Group pitch video and report due	Thursday 28th March 2024, 5pm	
	Communication piece due	Monday 22 April 2024, 5pm	

Assessments

Summary

	Description	Deadline	Word limit	Deadline for Tutors to provide Feedback
Coursework 30%	Engagement Project Pitch video (group assessed)	Thursday 28th March 2024, 5pm	10 minutes	
Coursework 30%	Group report (500 words per group member)	Thursday 28th March 2024, 5pm	2000	
Coursework 40%	Communication piece	Monday 22 April 2024 5pm	1000	

Assignments & Specific Criteria for Assessment for this Module:

Group Assessments

Students will work in groups of 4 to design a public engagement activity, in response to one of the prompts, below, that integrates theories and concepts covered in the module. You will be assessed on a 10 minute video presentation, and a 2000-word report. Each member of the group is expected to contribute equally to the workload. The tutor will place you in groups.

It is the group's responsibility to organize itself, meet regularly, and delegate tasks. We recommend that groups devise a contract, specifying what you expect from each other, that is then signed by all group members. This contract might include agreements on communication channels, meeting frequency, task allocations, responsibilities. Groups must operate according to principles of equity, inclusivity, understanding, and mutual respect. No forms of bullying or harassment are acceptable.

If any student has concerns about any of the above, please speak with one of the course tutors at the earliest opportunity.

Each member of the group will receive the same overall mark for both the video presentation and report.

Video Presentation (30%)

Each group will produce a video that pitches their proposed activity to a sponsor organization. The pitch should convincingly incorporate ideas and theories from the module. Deficit model approaches should be avoided. The format of the video can vary – marks will not be awarded for visual sophistication or

style. However, the pitch must be delivered clearly and persuasively. Each member of the group is required to appear in the presentation.

The presentation should address the following issues:

- Aims and Objectives - how you are responding to the scenario you have chosen and the reasons for this.

- Audience - who, specifically do you intend to engage, and what are their needs?

- Public Engagement Activity/Activities - what activity will you design, what are the

  practicalities involved, and how does it fit with your aims, your audience's needs, and

  the needs of the institution you are pitching to?

- Evaluation - how will you know that you have been successful in your aims?

  Further details, including marking criteria, will be provided in class and on Moodle.

Group Report (30%)

Each group will provide a written rationale for their chosen activity, where justifications for decisions will be anchored in the academic literature explored in the first term. Each student should contribute around 500 words to the final report. Students should draw from the literature we have covered in HPSC0091 and HPSC0153 to justify the following decisions:

- Why you chose your specific aims and objectives.

- How you decided which audience needs were relevant.

- Why you chose your specific engagement activity.

- How you decided which evaluation approach to use.

- What communication materials were deemed necessary

Further details, including marking criteria, will be provided in class and on Moodle.

Individual assessment

Communication piece (40%)

Each student will take responsibility for developing and writing/creating one piece of communication related to their engagement project and its needs. This could be a press release, a piece of speculative fiction that might aid discussions, some data visualization needed as part of the process. Other communication products are possible, and can be discussed with the tutors as part of the project development.

Please see Moodle for more information about the assessments and specific assessment criteria.

Prompts for engagement projects

1. A mutual aid collective in Stratford, East London, has organised a taskforce to provide information and guidance to the local community about vaccines. They have no resources but would like help organising and managing this project.

2. The Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) in London would like to engage a range of stakeholders on the issue of the use of facial recognition technology in policing. They are open to innovative and experimental methods of deliberation and engagement.
3. The Shanghai Science and Technology Museum wants to conduct an overhaul of its Human Beings and Health exhibition to make it more engaging and relevant for young people.
4. The National Institute for Health Research has decided to commit some of its substantial research budget to increasing diversity in mental health research. They would like to take a user-centred approach to building their mental health and BAME community research platforms.
5. A research centre on rheumatological diseases in young people is reviewing the patient information sheets and wider methods to inform and recruit patients involved in research. They want this process to be more inclusive.
6. A local community group wants to set up a citizen science project with UCL researchers on local air quality and need help designing a process that will help them lobby local and national policymakers.
7. Sciencewise needs help to run some public engagement activities on self-driving cars to help inform policy-makers within Parliament.
8. The UK Government's Commission for Countering Extremism would like to engage with groups who are concerned about emerging technologies such as AI, 5g, and synthetic biology with a view to countering conspiracy theories.
9. Genomics England's diverse data team would like to pilot engagement activities with BAME communities to understand their concerns about genomics medicine.
10. AstraZeneca would like to develop a campaign to encourage people who are vaccine hesitant to take a COVID-19 booster vaccine. They are keen to target marginalised groups.

Generative AI Statement

Students are permitted to use AI tools for:

- ☐ Drafting ideas and planning or structuring written materials
- ☐ Reviewing and critically analysing written materials to assess their validity
- ☐ Helping to improve your grammar and writing structure – especially helpful if English is a second language
- ☐ Experimenting with different writing styles
- ☐ Getting explanations

Students are **not** permitted to use AI tools for:

- ☐ Writing the entire essay or large chunks of an essay (e.g., more than a few sentences). Any use of AI must be documented (see below).

Students **must** correctly document their use of AI tools so that it can be appropriately acknowledged. Please see the library's guidance, here - https://library-guides.ucl.ac.uk/referencing-plagiarism/acknowledging-AI

Please be aware that you are responsible for ensuring that the assessment that you submit correctly references the use of other people's ideas and work. If you submit AI generated text that has used the work of human authors and it is not appropriately referenced, this may count as academic misconduct.

For further information on using AI in your assessments, please visit - https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/exams-and-assessments/assessment-success-guide/engaging-ai-your-education-and-assessment

Aims & objectives

Aims:
This course aims to build upon the critical explorations in term one which explore how scientists, policymakers, entrepreneurs, and the public build relationships between science, technology, and society and how we might understand the products of science communication. It aims to equip students with the skills and theoretical sophistication to design public engagement activities and content that are just, equitable, and impactful for a diverse range of audiences.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- demonstrate a practical understanding of public engagement with science activities in a range of public contexts

- offer analysis of the theoretical underpinnings of practical activity in this area.

- recognise the needs, priorities and motivations of specific stakeholder communities and be able to work in partnership to develop appropriate project ideas suitable for those contexts

- evaluate the effectiveness of public engagement processes in particular social contexts

- reflect on the purpose, relevance and effectiveness of public engagement.

- Develop content suitable to a situated engagement project

By the end of the course, students should also be able to demonstrate:

- research skills appropriate to post-graduate taught modules

- time and project management, working to tight deadlines

- independence and initiative in project work

- sensitivity and aptitude for working in partnership with wider community groups and/or relevant stakeholders

• effective oral and written communication skills with a wide range of audiences

You are expected to attend all classes and to demonstrate active engagement with your learning through taking on teaching & learning activities, participating in discussions, exploring readings and other learning materials, sharing notes & materials as appropriate and sharing your ideas with the group. A large part of this module is group work based, as such your presence is important, as is good communication with your group at all time.

Reading list

See Moodle for specific readings.