

Science Communication in a Global Perspective

(HPSC0153)

Course Syllabus

2024-25 session | Prof Charlotte Sleigh | c.sleigh@ucl.ac.uk

Course Information

This module introduces students some of the different products of science communication (films, web videos, museums, written word ...), and gives them the toolkit to critically analyse the implicit and explicit messages that are conveyed in these mediated forms. Our big question is this: how is science *represented* through science communication?

This module is open for registration only to students in the MSc in Science communication, for which it is compulsory.

Basic course information

Course website:	See Moodle
Moodle Web site:	Search "HPSC0153"
Assessment:	Coursework
Timetable:	See portico
Prerequisites:	None
Required texts:	See reading list
Course tutors:	Charlotte Sleigh,
Contact:	c.sleigh@ucl.ac.uk
Web:	
Office location:	22 Gordon Square, Room 3.2
Office hours:	TBC

How is the course organised?

Teaching for this course takes the form of weekly face-to-face two-hour sessions. The face-to-face sessions will be discussion-based. The class will critically engage with **case-studies** in science communication under the guidance of the course tutor, and drawing on **academic reading** that explains, develops, and provides technical vocabulary for the critical analyses that we do in class.

Check ahead for the case studies and/or academic readings that are assigned in advance of each session. Allow plenty of time to read, view or listen to whatever you need to discuss in class. Students are expected to do the reading as assigned, and to try out their techniques in class. They are also expected to ask questions about aspects of the readings that they did not understand.

Students will be organised into small groups (of about 3 people) and each group will prepare a case study to bring to the class during the latter weeks of term. The case study that they choose will build on the theme of the previous week. All students are expected to engage in these discussions, not just the weekly presenters.

Synoptic Schedule

UCL Week	Topics
6	Starting out in science communication
7	Representation (1) What are scientists like?
8	Critical Discourse Analysis
9	Representation (2) What is technology like?
10	Representation (3) What is science like?
11	Reading week
12	Critical analysis of text
13	Museums and science centres
14	Assignment advice
15	Visual information and its misuses
16	... and relax

See Moodle and library link for details of case studies and readings related to each session.

Assessments

Assessment brief

Choose three differently mediated products of science communication (e.g. a film, a blog, a museum exhibition). **Provide a critical analysis of each one**, drawing on techniques and themes discussed in class and in the assigned (or additional) readings.

Deadline: 11th December, 5pm UK local time

- The total word count should be **3000 words**, split approximately evenly between the three examples.
- Referencing should be either [MHRA](#) or [Chicago](#) (either notes-bibliography or author-date). Page references must include **exact page numbers** for quotations or ideas discussed.
- There should also be a full bibliography at the end, which is not included in the word count.
- AI use - see Moodle for full details.
- You can use the case study that your group presented in class as one of your three examples. You can use a case study that another group presented in class as one of your three examples. At least one of the three examples must be one that has not been discussed in class.
- Your analysis should include reference to STS literature on the topic as well as media analysis.

The written assessment builds on the two aspects of classroom activity: critical analysis of case-studies, and development of academic tools for critique.

You can hand in a draft of one of the critiques (i.e. 1000 words) by 5pm on 14 November.

Assessment Criteria

A list of criteria is available on Moodle.

Use of AI in your assessment

See Moodle

Aims & objectives

Aims:

The aims of the modules are to introduce students to critical tools for understanding and critiquing the products of science communication. As such, they should be positioned to create their own science communication products in other modules (and in their professional futures) that contain and convey representationally and politically responsible messages about science and technology.

Objectives:

By the end of the module students

- will be familiar with theories and concepts in critical studies including representation theory and critical discourse analysis
- will be able to apply these theories and concepts, and their political dimensions, to science communication
- will be able to critically analyse forms of science communication across a range of media