

Global Partners in Science Communication

Sample 2-day syllabus

DAY ONE

9 am	INTRODUCTION Welcome! It all starts here. We will spend a few minutes to discuss the goals of the program. You will hand in your pre-course assignment and we'll go over a few key ideas that will help set the tone for the next two days.
9:15 am	BOOK CLUB The first session is an icebreaker based on the book covers you have brought. Each coffee club guest (that's you) will interpret the strength and messages of the visual communication of your book cover, and tell something about yourself in the process. Then we'll tackle two other opening exercises.
9:45 am	BODY OVER MIND We'll begin some with warm up exercises that will prevent that mind of yours from being trapped in a body that is working against you.
10:15 am	R.E.S.P.E.C.T. AND AUDIENCES Before we dive into skill development, we get strategic – and empirical. We will discuss why audience is the first thing to consider in communicating about science, and what it means to be as empirical about understanding audiences as we are about science itself. We will work this morning on activities that help communicators reset the dial from “content first” to “audience first.” It will soon become clear that audiences bring their own ideas to every topic, even if uninformed.
noon	LUNCH
1:00 pm	UBER PITCH People are busy and it's a noisy world, filled with delightful distractions. Why should anyone care about the public health issues on the top of your minds? We will begin by having participants prepare an “uber pitch” that gets people's attention. Then, we will record each person on videotape presenting his or her elevator pitch. We'll discuss what works <i>if you only have one minute</i> to tell your story in a compelling way. This is an exercise in focused storytelling – which is the magic at the heart of all powerful communications.
3:00 pm	STORY STRUCTURE Your writing flows like a river of perfection. But sometimes it doesn't. No one needs to know that understanding structure can help you start and shape your beautiful science stories.
3:00 pm	UBER RE-PITCH With the lessons of the day in mind, and some practice and feedback on your concise messaging, we'll re-write your Uber Pitches and present them to a different audience. This is where your skills get some exercise so you can get the attention of people from all walks of life!
4:30 pm	WRAP What have we learned today and how can audience-focused science storytelling inspire?

DAY TWO

9 am	<p>INTRODUCTION</p> <p>Review of audience first storytelling</p>
9:15 am	<p>PERSONALIZING THE IMPERSONAL</p> <p>Science communication often focuses on getting the science right, and that's essential, but a great story also includes people, especially you. This session asks you to ask yourself, why does your research matter to you? Why should it matter to anyone else? In this session we're asking you to write 75 words that would be an intro to a longer story, preferably about creative science and engineering. But somewhere in these 75 words you have to appear. This is a wonderful way to understand in a hands-on way the difference between talking to colleagues in your science or art circles and talking to pretty much anyone else. It can also set you up for writing your next blog or op-ed piece!</p>
11:00 am	<p>PLOTTING A LINEAR COURSE THROUGH COMPLEX MULTIFACETED SCIENCE STORIES</p> <p>"I didn't have time to write you a short letter, so I wrote a long one instead." As Mark Twain knows, it takes time to be brief and succinct In this session, we will workshop an case study to help develop skills that mix structure with passion.</p>
noon	LUNCH
1:00 pm	<p>CASE STUDY TWO: MAKING DECISIONS TO HELP OTHERS MAKE DECISIONS</p> <p>Roll up your sleeves, it's time to get hands-on with a real-life example of an issue you'd like to communicate. Your assignment will be to create a strategy for communicating a specific topic using what we have learned so far about getting the attention of an audience and then keeping it. We will work in small groups and then share finding with each other to see what works and where more time and attention might be needed.</p>
4:00 pm	CASE STUDY PRESENTATIONS
4:30 pm	<p>WRAP</p> <p>How can the work of the past two days be applied in practice in the days ahead?</p>