

English 492.001: Departmental Seminar in Science Communication

Spring 2012

Class will meet in Banc 228 by appointment (see schedule)

Instructor: Dr. Jo Koster, 228 Bancroft, 323-4557; kosterj@winthrop.edu

Enrolled Students: Catherine Zende, Adam Uzzell

Texts: There are no formal textbooks for this class. We will use available departmental web resources and materials from the students' portfolios as the basis for our work in the class.

Objectives: This zero-credit seminar serves as the assessment course for the B.S. in Science Communication major. The course enables the Department of English to ascertain whether its seniors can demonstrate the content knowledge, analytic and interpretive skills, and communication skills required by the major's assessment plan. Each student's work will be evaluated in light of the assessment goals for the major. The department's purpose is to discover those areas in which our students do well and also to identify weaknesses so that we may improve the program. This year, we are specifically gathering information to help us study the following 3 objectives:

- 1) Science Communication majors will be competent at both writing and speaking about science and technology. This will be assessed using the following:
 - Internship Proposal
 - Internship Assessment
 - Student Portfolio (assignments, résumé & job package)

- 2) Science Communication majors can adjust their style of writing and level of presentation to suit different audiences. This will be assessed using the following:
 - Internship Samples
 - Internship Assessment
 - Student Portfolio (assignments, résumé & job package)

- 3) Science Communication majors will be able to prepare and use effective visuals (photographs, computer graphics, Power Points, charts, graphs, and tables) to complement their writing and oral presentations.
 - Internship work samples
 - Internship Assessment
 - Student Portfolio (assignments, résumé & job package)

Please note: Because this course is focused on collecting data rather than instructing students, student learning outcomes have not been developed. Teaching evaluations are also not administered because the instructor on record is not teaching but rather facilitating the completion of various exercises.

Grading: You will be graded on an S/U basis for this class; to earn your **S**, you must complete **ALL** of the following course requirements and demonstrate that you have made a serious effort to do your best work. Your grade will not be calculated on the basis of a certain percentage but rather on your effort. If I think you have not completed one of the assignments thoughtfully, you will be required to do the assignment over. A student who does not complete all the assignments will earn a U and will not be allowed to graduate until the requirements are fulfilled.

Attendance: Given the special nature of this class, attendance and prompt arrival to the scheduled meetings of the class are very important. In short, **absences are not allowed.**

Syllabus Change Policy: If for some reason dates on the schedule have to be changed, students will be notified by e-mail through their Winthrop e-mail accounts.

Requirements:

Students will:

- Compile a portfolio (self-assessment and selection of 6 course assignments) demonstrating range and breadth of your scientific and technical communication abilities for a variety of audiences. At least two must incorporate properly-documented outside research, and at least two must contain or be comprised of graphic/multimedia components, such as presentations, illustrated texts, web pages, etc.)
- Create a résumé and professional writing/multimedia sample: materials that you would send out to a prospective employer to demonstrate your skills
- Participation in a focus group discussion about the department, students' studies, the curriculum, etc. and completion of the departmental opinionaire

Schedule (specific dates/times to be set based on student schedules)

Week 1	Meeting to review portfolio requirements and schedule for class (1/10 at 11 AM)
Week 4	Résumé and professional writing sample due by Friday Feb. 3 at 5 pm.
Week 9	Focus group (week of March 5); turn in opinionaire at this meeting
Week 12	Draft of portfolio due (should be mostly complete with exception of internship assessment) by Monday April 2 at 5 pm.
Week 15	Finished portfolio due on Friday April 20 by 5 pm.
Study Day	Individual conferences on the finished portfolios.