

Storytelling about Science

11:374:310

3 credits

Meeting time: To be determined

Location: To be determined

Instructor: Mary L. Nucci, Ph.D.

Office: Cook Office Building (Cook), Room 214

Office Hours: By arrangement

Email: mnucci@sebs.rutgers.edu

Course Description

Understanding and addressing the most complex and urgent challenges of our time—climate change, biodiversity loss, genetic engineering—requires the ability to critically assess and communicate scientific ideas. The ability to translate scientific research to all audiences is an invaluable skill for both non-science and science majors, and the narrative techniques of nonfiction can help students present ideas with compelling energy, clarity, and creativity. In this course, students will have the opportunity to develop their writing and communication for both the academic and public context and hone their critical reading skills. Course topics will include knowing your audience, reading like a writer, unpacking structure, staging uncertainty, delivering a pitch, research techniques, and working responsibly with sources. Students will develop techniques for conveying the story of research work to a range of audiences.

Course prerequisite: All students must have completed Expository Writing 01:355:101 or its equivalent.

Course Learning Goals

- Read both academic and popular science prose with an understanding of structure and the ability to identify key ideas and questions.
- Communicate complex scientific ideas, in grammatically correct English, to both an academic and public audience with eloquence, precision, and creativity.
- Incorporate conceptual and editorial feedback from peers and instructor by engaging in the drafting and revision process.
- Understand and practice the different rhetorical strategies unique to an academic discipline or the public sphere.
- Discover and appraise sources through the research process and use the conventions of academic attribution and citation correctly.
- Analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources to generate new ideas, and present those ideas with energy and creativity.

Course Materials

All course materials will be provided in Canvas or handed out in class.

Class protocol

Class begins promptly. Be on time. If you have a conflict or an unavoidable reason to be late, please let me know in advance by phoning, texting or sending an email. Please always have a writing notebook and pen/pencil with you in class.

Assignments and Grading

As this is an interactive class where you are expected to read aloud, provide editorial comments and present your work, you will be expected to participate fully (both leading and responding) in all class discussions. Class participation points (3 points/class) will be assigned as 3 points: complete participation, 2 points: partial participation, 1 point: minimal participation, 0 points: no participation. Participation is defined as engaging with discussions and activities, posing questions, providing input, and responding to other students.

Assignments will include essays on assigned readings; research proposal, abstract and annotated bibliography that will result in written texts for different audiences; and a final presentation. Final grade will be determined as a percentage of the total points from assignments and participation using the standard Rutgers grading scale: A = 89.5-100; B+ = 84.5-89.49; B = 79.5-84.49; C+ = 74.5-79.49; C = 69.5-74.49; D = 59.5-69.49; F = <59.4.

Absence policy

Rutgers students are expected to attend all scheduled course meetings. University policy excuses absences due to religious observance or participation in Rutgers-approved activities and permits students to make up work missed for these circumstances. If you will be absent from a class, lab, or exam for any reason, you need to report your absence through the Absence Reporting Website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>. The system will generate an email to me about your absence, but the University recommends that you also contact me directly to let me know of your absence. I will take attendance at every class.

Key points to know:

- If you enter the class after I take attendance, please make sure at the end of the class I mark you as present.
- Note that if you miss class, you will not receive the participation points for that class.
- More than 2 unexcused absences other than per Rutgers guidelines (an excused absence is illness with a doctor's note, family emergency, religious observation or Rutgers-sanctioned event with note) MAY result in a letter grade drop for your final grade.
- Only students with excused absences will be offered the opportunity to meet with me to review the class content.

Student Wellness Services

School and life can get stressful, and Rutgers has many ways to get help. We can offer a Safer Space and help you connect to these resources, but as instructors we have a mandatory duty to report some issues and concerns to the appropriate offices at the University. We can offer you privacy and discretion, but not confidentiality.

There are resources for students with long-term problems through the Office of Student Support (<https://studentsupport.rutgers.edu/>). This office, part of the Dean of Students office, services students who have ongoing personal or medical issues and anticipate extended absences or missing multiple assignments. Please contact this office if you have issues that make you miss many classes and/or assignments.

The faculty and staff at Rutgers are committed to your success. Students who are successful tend to seek out resources that enable them to excel academically, maintain their health and wellness, prepare for future careers, navigate college life and finances, and connect with the RU community. Resources that can help you succeed and connect with the Rutgers community can be found at success.rutgers.edu.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism and other types of dishonesty is a major offense at Rutgers University. This includes copying of images and texts without giving full credit, paraphrasing inappropriately, cheating, using AI-derived tools to write text for you, and many other actions. We will be using Turnitin for checking submitted texts, and we will report any instances of academic misconduct to the Office of Student Conduct.

You are responsible for understanding the academic integrity policy and following its principles. Failure to uphold these principles of academic integrity threatens both the reputation of the University and the value of the degrees awarded to its students. Every member of the University community therefore bears a responsibility for ensuring that the highest standards of academic integrity are upheld. The complete academic integrity policy can be found here: <https://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>.

Disability Services

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in

your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>

Diversity and Inclusion

It is our intention that students of all backgrounds and abilities will be well served by this course. We will work to create an environment of inclusion that respects and affirms the inherent dignity, value, and uniqueness of all individuals, communities and perspectives. We are lucky to have a diverse university. Diverse voices and life experiences enhance the learning process and we welcome students to share their personal experiences. We will not tolerate disrespectful language or behavior against any individual or group. If you feel as though you have been disrespected or treated unfairly by the instructors or any other individual please let us know. You may speak with the instructors in person, over email or report anonymously using the feedback note box. You may also report bias to Rutgers Diversity and Inclusion initiative using this link: <http://inclusion.rutgers.edu/report-bias-incident/>

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we will be conducting class on the traditional homelands of the Lenape people. "To recognize the land is an expression of gratitude and appreciation to those whose territory you reside on, and a way of honoring the Indigenous people who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial. It is important to understand the long-standing history that has brought you to reside on the land, and to seek to understand your place within that history. Land acknowledgements do not exist in a past tense, or historical context: colonialism is a current ongoing process, and we need to build our mindfulness of our present participation. It is also worth noting that acknowledging the land is Indigenous protocol."

(From <http://www.lspirg.org/knowtheland/>)