Description
In this era of information overload, how can scientists connect with non-scientist audiences? How can they best convey urgency and relevance? This class will go beyond urging the use of plain English—students will learn how to create emotional connections, why myth-busting is pointless, how to finesse the challenge of teaching people new things, and more. Projects include writing assignments, a hands-on presentation, and the creation of visuals. The process of receiving and giving feedback, as well as the necessity of revision, will be emphasized. This is a 7-week course and is open to graduate students, who are eligible for tuition waivers.

Prerequisites
For graduate students only.

Instructor
Christine Grillo, cgrillo1@jhu.edu, http://engineering.jhu.edu/cle/faculty/
Office: Maryland 16
Office hours: Monday 5:30 – 6:30pm or Thursday by appointment

Meetings
Monday 3:00 – 5:30pm, Gilman 119

Textbook

Online Resources
Please log in to Blackboard for all materials related to this course.

Course Objectives
(1) Students will learn about challenges in communications with the general public, and some key strategies for overcoming them.
(2) Students will improve their written communication skills.
(3) Students will improve their in-person presentation skills.
(4) Students will learn how to constructively give and receive feedback.

Course Topics
- The 3 tiers of science communication
- Barriers to trust, barriers to learning new things
- Plain English versus jargon
- Connecting with an audience / resonance
Course Expectations & Grading

Students are expected to think open-mindedly about their own work and about the work of their peers. They will do weekly writing assignments about their work and about their peers’ work. They will trade work with other students in the class in order to get and give feedback. They will be expected, as part of their assignments, to solicit feedback on assignments from non-scientists and non-engineers. They will give final presentations with visual aids for their final assessment.

Key Dates

Final presentations will take place on February 29 and March 7.

Assignments & Readings

See Blackboard.

Ethics

The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. In addition, the specific ethics guidelines for this course are:

1. Utmost respect for your peers and their efforts in writing, critiquing, and presenting material.
2. Generosity in giving feedback, i.e., honest and constructive criticism.

Report any violations you witness to the instructor.

You can find more information about university misconduct policies on the web at these sites:

- For undergraduates: http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/undergrad-students/student-life-policies/
- For graduate students: http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/grad-students/graduate-specific-policies/

Students with Disabilities

Any student with a disability who may need accommodations in this class must obtain an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, (410) 516-4720, studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu.

ABET Outcomes

- Understanding of professional and ethical responsibility (f).
- Ability to communicate effectively (g).
- The broad education necessary to understand the impact of engineering solutions in a global and societal context (h).
- Recognition of the need for and an ability to engage in life-long learning (i).
- Knowledge of contemporary issues (j).