Course Syllabus for NSCI 396: Communication for Emerging Scientists II

Instructor
Sarah Hansen, M.S. (she/her/hers)
STEM communications manager
hansen.sarah@umbc.edu
Introduction video

Course Description
This course is the second in a two-course series. By the end of this course, you will realize that excellent communication skills will be a crucial asset in your research career. You will also have practiced and refined those skills in a variety of formats. As a result, you will be prepared to use your skills to apply for internships and jobs, communicate science in an accessible way, and grow your professional network— all with confidence.

Course Learning Objectives
Upon successful completion of this course, you will:
…have generated a polished professional portfolio that is publicly available on the internet.
…have written a research proposal and used it to apply for a real research opportunity.
…have refined and demonstrated your ability to explain scientific research in an accessible way in writing and speech.
…have enhanced your public speaking skills so you can give engaging, informative presentations.
…have curated a professional social media presence, including LinkedIn and Twitter.
…have refined your informal communication and networking skills, such as reaching out to contacts for informational interviews and sending thank-you notes.

Class logistics
This course will occur completely online. You should expect to spend a total of 2 – 3 hours per week on this class, both on weeks when we meet synchronously and weeks when we do not (see the detailed class schedule). Synchronous class meetings will occur on Wednesdays from 5:30 – 6:20 p.m. via WebEx. If you are consistently spending more or less than 2 – 3 hours per week on this class, please let me know.

Office Hours
Office hours will occur via WebEx. I will invite you all to online office hours from 11 a.m. – noon on Fridays on weeks when we meet synchronously. On asynchronous weeks, office hours will occur during our normal class time. Feel free to drop in to chat about assignments or anything else. I would love to get to know you all better, so casual conversation is welcome! Feel free to contact me directly if you need to set up a meeting at a different time.

Blackboard
As an online class, the course Blackboard Ultra site will be an indispensable resource for you. Please check it frequently. All relevant communication and content for the course will be available on Blackboard. Before you ask me a question, *check Blackboard*. You will also submit some of your

assignments via Blackboard. If you have any technical concerns, please let me know as soon as possible so we can work together to help you resolve them. It is important that each of you has an equitable opportunity to be successful in this course.

Course engagement expectations

This course emphasizes active engagement during synchronous class sessions and asynchronously on Blackboard. Your consistent active participation will be critical for your success. To respect privacy and people's different situations, I am choosing not to require that cameras be on during synchronous sessions. If you are comfortable doing so, I encourage you to use your camera. If not, I still expect you to engage in synchronous activities by speaking, contributing to the chat, or in other ways. On the other hand, having your camera on does not in itself guarantee that you will be considered an active participant during that session. Please let me know about any concerns or anticipated challenges you may have related to engaging with the course as soon as possible.

Grading

There are no exams in this course. Final grades will be assigned on a pass/fail basis. In order to pass, your final grade must be greater than 65 percent, **and you must submit every core assignment** (i.e. you cannot completely skip any core assignments, even if your grade would still be above 65 percent). The core assignments include the research proposal, oral presentations, web portfolio, professional social media presence, and interpersonal communication samples.

Assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesdays, whether class activities are occurring synchronously or asynchronously. I will post assignments within the folder for the appropriate topic on Blackboard.

Late work: I expect you to submit all of your work on time. Every assignment has points allocated for following workflow instructions (e.g. how/where to submit, file naming conventions, etc.) and timeliness built into its rubric. If your work is late or submitted incorrectly, you will lose these points.
NEW THIS SEMESTER: I will not accept any assignments more than one week late, unless you have communicated with me directly about extenuating circumstances BEFORE the one-week timeframe passes. Based on the requirements for passing, this means that if you submit a core assignment more than one week late without communicating with me, *you will fail the course.* COMMUNICATION IS VITAL.

Assignment	Weight (% of final grade)
Engagement	**20**
Synchronous attendance/participation (10%) Blackboard Quizzes and Discussions (10%)	
Peer Feedback	**20**
Core Assignments	**60**
Interpersonal communication (10%) Professional Social Media (10%) Oral Presentations (10%) Research Proposal (10%) Web Portfolio (10%) Blog Post (10%)	

Title IX Statement: Disclosures of Sexual Misconduct, Gender Discrimination and Harassment and Child Abuse or Neglect

As an instructor, I am considered a Responsible Employee, per **UMBC's Policy on Prohibited Sexual Misconduct, Interpersonal Violence, and Other Related Misconduct**.

While my goal is for you to be able to share information related to your life experiences through discussion and written work, I want to be transparent that as a Responsible Employee I am required to report disclosures of sexual assault, domestic violence, relationship violence, stalking, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment or discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression or pregnancy, to the university's Title IX coordinator.

As an instructor, I also have a mandatory obligation to report disclosures of or suspected instances of child abuse or neglect (**www.usmh.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws/SectionVI/VI150.pdf**).

The purpose of these reporting requirements is for the university to inform you of options, supports and resources; *you will not be forced to file a report with the police*. Further, you are able to receive supports and resources, even if you choose not to request that any action be taken. Please note that in certain situations, based on the nature of the disclosure, the university may need to take action.

If you need to speak with someone in confidence about an incident, UMBC has the following Confidential Resources available to support you:
- The Counseling Center: 410-455-2742
- University Health Services: 410-455-2542
- For after-hours emergency consultation, call the police at 410-455-5555

Other on-campus supports and resources:
- The Women's Center (available to students of all genders): 410-455-2714
- Title IX Coordinator: 410-455-1606

Academic Integrity

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC's scholarly community, in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. **Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong.** Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension or dismissal. To read the full Student Academic Conduct Policy, consult the UMBC Student Handbook, the Faculty Handbook, or the UMBC Policies section of the UMBC Directory."

Undergraduate Honor Statement:

I hereby assume the responsibilities of an engaged member in a scholarly and civic community in which academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. It is my active participation that affirms these principles and gives them true meaning as well as value in my education. I realize that by committing acts of dishonesty I hurt myself and place an indelible mark on the reputation of UMBC. Therefore, I will not cheat, fabricate materials, plagiarize, or help another to undertake such acts of academic dishonesty, nor will I protect those who engage in acts of academic dishonesty.

Consequences for academic misconduct may include, but are not limited to, being reported to the UMBC Academic Conduct Committee, a grade of zero for the assignment, and/or a 10 percent reduction in one's final grade. In egregious cases, academic misconduct can even result in dismissal from the university.

In conclusion, do not cheat! If you feel so overwhelmed that you are tempted to cheat or plagiarize, please reach out to me for support right away. Then we can work together to find a way for you to be successful without cheating.

Students with Disabilities

UMBC is committed to eliminating discriminatory obstacles that may disadvantage students based on disability. If you have a disability and want to request accommodations, you can register with the Office of Student Disability Services (SDS). If you have questions about Student Disability Services, you can contact them. If you are approved to receive accommodations for this class, make an appointment to meet with me to discuss your SDS-approved accommodations and I will be happy to work with you.

Brave Space Guidelines
Please review these thoughtful guidelines shared by the UMBC Women's Center. They should govern all of our synchronous and asynchronous interactions.

Weekly Class Schedule
Subject to change **– Check Blackboard and your email for the latest updates.**
Activities and homework are due by 11:59 p.m. on the next class date unless otherwise noted.
Additional details, links, and instructions are available on Blackboard in the folder for the relevant topic.

Date	Meeting	Topic	In class activities	Homework
1/27	WebEx	Interpersonal Communication	- Review syllabus - Welcome activity	**Video:** Interpersonal communication **Assignment:** Draft professional emails to two UMBC professors **Quiz:** Syllabus quiz
1/29	Office Hours 11 a.m. – noon			
2/3	Asynchronous, Office Hours 5:30 – 6:30	Interpersonal communication / Web Portfolio	**Reading and/or video:** Informational interviews **Quiz:** Informational Interviews **Assignment:** Review the rubric for the Web Portfolio, and make sure you can access any work you completed last semester. At a minimum, create your site and add your contact information and "about me" section.

2/10	Asynchronous, Office Hours 5:30 – 6:30	Interpersonal Communication / Presentations	**Video and/or reading:** Presentation skills **Quiz:** Presentation skills **Assignment:** Revise your draft emails as needed based on feedback from Ms. Hansen, then send them. Schedule an informational interview with at least one faculty member. **Assignment:** Participate in an informational interview with a faculty member, and then write them a thank-you note. (This will be one of your interpersonal communication samples.) *(due 2/24)*	
2/17	Asynchronous, Office Hours 5:30 – 6:30	Interpersonal Communication / Presentations	**Assignment:** Prepare a two-minute presentation on your informational interview. **Assignment:** Invite your interviewee to the presentations. (This will be one of your interpersonal communication samples.)	
2/24	WebEx	Presentations / Web Portfolio	**Presentation 1:** Give a two-minute presentation to the class about your interview.	**Peer feedback:** Submit feedback to three assigned colleagues on their presentations. **Assignment:** Add your resume or CV and any optional sections to your Web Portfolio.
2/26	Office Hours 11 a.m. – noon			
3/3	Asynchronous, Office Hours 5:30 – 6:30	Professional Social Media	**Video and/or reading:** Social media as a professional tool **Quiz:** Professional social media **Assignment:** Create or update your LinkedIn profile. Create a professional Twitter account and begin to curate it.	
3/10	WebEx	Research Proposal / Social media	**Guest speaker:** Research Proposals **Activity:** Select a research opportunity to apply for. Gather its requirements and due dates and select a proposal topic.	**Assignment:** Reach out to a faculty or staff member at UMBC or an institution relevant to your opportunity to ask a question. (This is another communication sample.) **Assignment:** Continue curating your professional social media presence, and add your links/handles to your Web Portfolio. ***Strongly recommended:*** Start to think about/draft your research proposal before we return from spring break.
3/12	Office hours, 11 a.m. – noon			
3/17	SPRING BREAK			
3/24	Asynchronous, Office Hours 5:30 – 6:30	Research Proposal / Blogging	**Assignment:** Draft your research proposal. **Video and/or reading:** Science blogging **Discussion:** Science blogging **Activity:** Schedule a one-on-one check-in with Ms. Hansen for no later than 4/9.	

3/31	Asynchronous, Office Hours 5:30 – 6:30	Research Proposal / Blogging	**Peer feedback:** Offer feedback to three of your colleagues on their proposals. **Assignment:** Compile all four of your interpersonal communication samples and submit as one file. **Activity:** Pick a topic for a science Blog Post. **Activity:** Continue curating your social media presence.	
4/7	Asynchronous, Office Hours 5:30 – 6:30	Research Proposal / Blogging	**Assignment:** Draft a science Blog Post **Assignment:** Revise your Research Proposal *(due 4/21)*.	
4/9	**Make sure you've had your one-on-one check-in with Ms. Hansen by this date!**			
4/14	Asynchronous, Office Hours 5:30 – 6:30	Research proposal / Blogging	**Peer feedback:** Provide feedback to three of your peers on their Blog Posts. **Assignment:** Finalize and submit your Research Proposal.	
4/21	WebEx	Blog Post / Presentations	**Check in: Community-building activity**	**Assignment:** Revise and submit your Blog Post, and post it to your Web Portfolio.
4/23	Office Hours, 11 a.m. – noon			
4/28	Asynchronous, Office Hours 5:30 – 6:30	Presentations	**Assignment:** Develop a 5 - 7 minute presentation on the research discussed in your proposal *(final version due 5/12, rough cut due 5/5)*. **Assignment:** Post a links to your final curated professional social media accounts in Blackboard.	
5/5	WebEx	Presentations	**Activity:** Practice presentations in breakout groups and offer feedback.	**Assignment:** Finalize your presentation and post it to VoiceThread. **Assignment:** Finalize and submit your Web Portfolio.
5/7	Office Hours, 11 a.m. – noon			
5/12	WebEx	Wrap-up	**Celebration! Web Portfolio show-and-tell**	**Assignment:** Complete course evaluation, including written comments, please! **Peer feedback:** Engage with your colleagues' presentations on VoiceThread *(due assigned exam day, TBA)*.