

Master of Science in Sustainability Management

SUMA PS5180 Writing About Global Science for International Media

Dates: Session B (Jul 1 - Aug 9), Tuesdays and Thursdays: 6:10 PM – 8:00 PM Location: TBD

3 Credits

[Area 1]

Instructor: Prof. Claudia Dreifus, Instructor of Practice, cd2106@columbia.edu
Office Hours: TBD
Response Policy: Preferred means of communication is via email and students can expect responses typically within 24 hours during the work week. Weekend communication will be limited with delayed response.

Teaching assistant: TBD
Office Hours: TBD
Response Policy: TBD

Course Overview:

Students will be asked to produce approximately four different types of feature articles about scientific subjects during the summer semester: an op-ed, a question & answer style interview, coverage of an event or a specific place, and a long-form narrative feature story or investigative report on some scientific question.

On the whole, the class will be organized around lectures about each genre of writing and then a class assignment in that style. Students, like professional journalists, will sometimes be asked to produce rewrites of their submissions.

Students should plan on using their weekends this summer for writing and reporting as best they can or at least reporting their stories remotely. It's going to be hectic, but fun.

The main requirement for participation in the course is a defined interest in writing for magazines, newspapers, or the internet. This is not a remedial writing course; it's also not a course for the timid or inflexible. It's going to involve getting off campus. Optimally, we'd like for you to go into the community, learning from people about science-related stories and combining real-life information with academic learning.

The pay-off is in a lifetime of skills that students will be able to use in multiple ways—even if they don't ever publish professionally. For instance, they will write more readable blog posts and be able to draw more readers to their personal or corporate websites. Or, they may find that their op-eds and letters to newspaper editors have a stronger chance of seeing publication.

Grades are based on writing skills, improvement of those skills, willingness to learn, attendance, reporting enterprise, and the meeting of deadlines. We ask that all registrants give the course the same seriousness and commitment that they might give to an employment situation. Think of this class as a newsroom. Your professors are your editors.

Publication of classwork will win extra consideration at grading time and we will do much to encourage it. In this era of internet magazines, newcomers can find markets with comparative ease. Many, many students in previous editions of this class have had classwork published professionally. We will be able to guide class members to Columbia based publications.

Because this class is formatted as a workshop, students will be asked to produce stories and probably rewrites. They are also asked to read and critique each other's work—gently and honestly.

CourseWorks and the sites we set up there will be a kind of town square. You'll be invited to leave your comments, notes, and critiques there. We ask you to check your Canvas/Courseworks page regularly and participate in the materials and exercises we leave there.

To some degree, we're going to be employing the "flipped classroom" model of education, which means that some of the learning will come from your own efforts. We'd like for you to meet with and work with your colleagues during the days when we are not convening on campus.

Meanwhile, classroom participation and attendance will be important factors in determining a final grade.

Lateness in filing assignments impedes the entire class progress, and unfortunately, must be penalized in grading.

Rules of road:

As mentioned earlier, we aim to conduct class as if it were a newsroom.

Because we want people to speak openly about their work, we ask that class members keep all discussions confidential. In the past, sensitive personal subjects have been discussed by students—working conditions at their place of employment, abortion, Covid infection, the assisted suicide of a parent. We want class members to write and speak freely. People may want to write about sensitive matters. Every class member should feel that their explorations will be protected. For that reason, we must insist that class sessions not be taped. Everything is OFF THE RECORD.

RESPECT. Aretha Franklin had it right. Though there is no mandated or correct format to our deliberations, civility, good manners and decency are always expected. As well of a commitment to keeping your colleagues work, ideas and expressions within the workshop's boundaries. People may sometimes be exploring personally sensitive topics. So, unless stated otherwise, "what happens in class stays in class."

Brief Course Description

This is an interdisciplinary workshop for scientists, sustainability professionals, conservation biologists, future NGO workers, and journalists seeking skills in communicating 21st century global science to the public.

Scientists will be given journalism skills; journalists will learn how to use science as the basis of their storytelling. Students currently working in the business world or the public sector will, by doing actual journalism, see what the news looks like from the other side of the desk.

Our standards and methods will, at all times, be those of mainstream journalism. We seek to encourage students to publish their classwork.

Background information

The course is designed to give students exercises and real-world experiences in producing feature stories on global science topics.

While most scientists and sustainability professionals have been trained to write in the style of peer-reviewed journals or business publications, we will focus on journalism, learning how to translate global science into accessible true stories that reach wide audiences.

The experiences of the scientific community during the recent Covid-19 pandemic illustrate the importance of scientists learning how to effectively communicate with the lay public. This course, one of the first in the country of its kind, seeks to offer the necessary tools.

Science is performed by passionate individuals who use their intelligence and determination to seek answers from nature. By telling their stories and uncovering the drama of discovery, we believe that there are ways for science to be successfully communicated to readers who might otherwise fear it. Currently, there are no comparable courses offered. Traditional science journalism classes generally target future journalists; but we hope to turn non-journalists into published writers. Our approach blends science, policy, international affairs, and journalism. We are willing to discuss advocacy, too.

With mass media more open than ever to freelance contributions, with new forms of media proliferating in cyberspace, and with Internet journalism increasingly open to beginning journalists, we see new opportunities for the scientifically interested to tell their stories, *if* they have the proper skills. With these opportunities in mind, we will consider the demands of new media and the Internet.

Es Pang, a student in this class a few years ago, saw the listicles she made for the course reproduced on BuzzFeed. Not surprisingly, she earned a high grade. Today, she leads the Asian American civil rights organization Holler Back.

The expansion of internet blog sites by mainstream news organizations has provided remarkable new opportunities for students to be published and develop portfolios.

Students from previous years have seen their classwork published on the Atlantic.com, Science Times/the New York Times,, the (London) Guardian, and of course, the Climate School's own State of the Planet.

The School of Professional Studies has inaugurated its own blog site, *Tomorrow's Minds at Work*. In the past the editor has published many opinion pieces produced by students as part of their coursework.

State of the Planet recently published some of the reports and essays produced in the Spring semester edition of this class.

Here are some examples:

<https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2022/04/05/its-time-to-think-about-lyme-disease-prevention/>

<https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2022/04/26/come-ride-on-the-cicada-carousel/>

<https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2022/03/16/environmentalism-shouldnt-be-this-white/>

Ultimately, we hope to show a climatologist how to get their op-ed into *The Washington Post* and to help an aid worker from South Sudan place her first-hand report on desert environments into *The Atlantic* or *Medium*.

We will welcome students from Columbia University's master's degree program in Sustainability Management, the sponsors of the course, but also from the various graduate science, environmental, sustainability and medical programs—as well as those studying humanitarian affairs, bioethics, public health, human rights, migration policy, conflict resolution, and international media and advocacy.

A special welcome is offered to students from the Climate School as they pioneer this bold new educational venture.

How to use this document effectively:

There are many examples of a genre cited here. Because of time constraints, we will probably not be discussing them in class. Nonetheless, reading them on your own will help you construct your own stories.

Summer is special

The tone of this workshop is a little less formal than a similar course given in the winter. The ambiance is more intimate. Because of this, if students have unavoidable travel needs, we will try to work to accommodate them.

Vaccinated? Professor Dreifus will be available for in-person office hours with vaccinated students in New York. Zoom and telephone office hours are also possible.

As a courtesy to the instructors, students are requested to wear masks during class and conference sessions.

Method of evaluation

The main prerequisites are a desire to write communicatively and a willingness to experiment with popular forms.

A fluid knowledge of written English is important, but students who have trained as journalists, scientists, or NGO professionals in non-English speaking countries are very welcome. Whenever possible, attempts will be made to meet the needs of students for whom English is a second language.

Because we are looking to create interesting non-fiction literature with science at its heart, we seek students with enthusiasm for both science and mass communications.

Students registering for this course should be willing to try to write in a style different from what they may have been trained for; they should also be willing to find their material through interviews, investigation, and observation. Above all, they should be willing to engage and work with journalistic methodology—at least for the duration of the course.

Grading

It's not easy to quantify a creative endeavor. What I look for is talent, skill, originality, resourcefulness, promptness in meeting deadlines, a collegial attitude in class participation—and of course, improvement of skills over a semester.

The magazine writing student who got up at five in the morning to approach Lee Bollinger about an interview while he took his morning run, got an “A,” even though her written English wasn't perfect. Another student this year, got up at a similar hour to meet vendors at the Union Square Greenmarket for her report on “Farm to Table” dining. She earned an A plus.

Early birds do well in this class.

The final grade will be calculated as described below:

FINAL GRADING SCALE

Grade	Percentage
A+	98–100 %
A	93–97.9 %
A-	90–92.9 %
B+	87–89.9 %
B	83–86.9 %
B-	80–82.9 %
C+	77–79.9 %
C	73–76.9 %
C-	70–72.9 %
D	60–69.9 %

F	59.9% and below
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How Grades Are Determined:

A serious determinant of a student's final grade is how much their writing and reporting has improved over the semesters. Students whose work improves greatly can expect to win a high grade.

Assignments	Weights
Writing assignments	50%
Creative reporting	20%
Classroom participation	20%
Adherence to journalistic form and standards	10%

Assignments

Assignment/Assessment	Individual or Group/
Assignment 1 Opinion Essay	Individual
Assignment 2 Q and A interview	Individual
Assignment 3 A query letter	Individual
Assignment 4 A letter to the Editor	Individual
Assignment 5 A lede of the long-form, Outline	Individual
Assignment 6 First draft of long-form feature article	Individual
Assignment 7, Final Long Form Feature Article	Individual

The course will address how to write various types of popular science articles of varying lengths, including how to research these pieces from top to bottom. During class, some of the students' work will be read aloud. Students are asked to offer helpful criticism to each other and work together on solving reporting problems.

Great writing skills and improvement of those skills is what we're looking for—but we also appreciate students who are willing to support their classmates, participate in constructive critiques, and who are willing to go the extra mile to do creative research for their pieces.

Whenever it is realistic, students are asked to submit their classroom work for publication. That can mean anything from mass circulation magazines to in-house publications at Columbia University and SIPA.

Students are encouraged to find Internet publishers for their work.

The Earth Institute/Climate School has a website (State of the Planet), as does the Sustainability Management program and students are encouraged to submit appropriate classwork there. SIPA students can publish sometimes on *SIPA News*, *The Morningside Post*, and the various student-led policy magazines. Many students have published stories that originated in class in *Columbia University's Consilience: A Journal of Sustainability*.

The School of Professional Studies has inaugurated a blog for student and faculty writing, *Tomorrow's Minds at Work*. Many students from previous years have published there.

We will also be submitting exceptional work for consideration by the editors of the various blogs at the New York Times and at different digital media sites—such as *Quanta*, *Undark* and *Medium*.

Writing is key to success in the course. We believe that writing is like gymnastics: the more you do, the better you get—so we spend a lot of time reading good science writing and practicing the craft.

We're looking for enthusiastic writers and curious reporters, but also students who will improve their skills over the semester. An improved/dedicated writer can be assured of a fine grade. Handing in assignments on deadline is critical. Because participation is a major aspect of this workshop, students are asked to attend all regular sessions.

I am available during office hours for one-on-one coaching and will also mentor students through their larger projects.

How to use this syllabus:

It is a roadmap, not an unbreakable rule of law. We will, most certainly, stray from it—depending on circumstances and the calendar.

Many of the suggested readings are just that—suggestions to help students find interesting examples of what we are studying. Because articles are listed, does not mean that they will be discussed in class. Still: reading them can help you with specific assignments. When approaching a new topic or genre, your professors will read examples to familiarize themselves with form and technique.

There is no expensive textbook required. In lieu of a text, Professor Dreifus has created a series of tip sheets to aid students in the production of their assignments.

Some of the suggested readings are to be found behind paywalls of publications. The Columbia University Library system has free access to thousands of newspapers and magazines. The stories can be obtained through them.

Also, you might in many instances consider taking out a subscription. Through the Columbia University Library system, you can obtain free digital subscriptions to the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal and the Financial Times. We urge you to do so. If you want to write for newspapers, it's useful to read them every day. We also urge you to read the paper edition of the New York Times on Tuesdays. That's when the NYT publishes its scientific supplement, Science Times.

Distance participation: Because of requirements relating to accreditation, we are prohibited from offering Zoom sessions of the class, even in instances of illness.

The recording of class sessions is prohibited: Because students sometimes discuss sensitive personal matters that they wish to write about during classroom discussions, we must prohibit taping of classroom lectures.

Local columbia markets where editors might be interested in work you produce in this class:

State of the Planet, the Climate School's online blog and magazine. The editors are seeking stories focused on sustainability or climate, with a Columbia connection.

The Morningside Post, published by SIPA students, but open to students from all schools on campus. Submit to Emily Muller, Editor. Here are their editorial requirements. <https://morningsidepost.com/submissions>Links to an external site.

Tomorrow's Minds at Work: the SPS Blog. Here is their submissions guideline. <https://sps.columbia.edu/contribute-tomorrows-minds-work-blog>. Grace Larkin is the editor. She can be reached at gl223@columbia.edu.

Consilience, This is a journal edited by Columbia undergraduates that focuses on sustainability and environmental questions. <https://journals.library.columbia.edu/index.php/consilience/callforsubmissions>

E-mail: Students are asked to email their completed writing assignments to Prof. Dreifus (cd2106@columbia.edu) and with the teaching assistant as an attachment on the Sunday before class by noon.

Because of the limited time-span of this course, there can be no flexibility on deadlines.

Stories are also to be simultaneously published on CourseWorks so that your classmates can read them.

We ask that you read your colleagues' submissions, make notes on them, post them on CourseWorks, and bring helpful comments to class. Part of your classwork and your eventual success comes from reading and critiquing the

works of others. Because your participation is a key element of the course, absences from class lectures are discouraged.

Cautionary note on pace: each edition of this class is different. The pace that we move forward is very much dependent on the skill level and capacity of the particular mix of students who've enrolled. Thus, we may move faster or slower than the schedule provided below.

Course Schedule/Course Calendar

Date	Topics and Activities	Readings (due on this day) Guest speakers	Assignments (due on this date)
7.2	<p>Introduction</p> <p>First hour: The difference - How science journalism contrasts with academic writing, everyday business writing, or public relations, as well as how it differs from standard feature writing.</p> <p>In this introductory session, we will identify current scientific topics that lend themselves to features for newspapers, magazines, and the Internet. We'll discuss the story structure of the science feature. What are the elements of a compelling science feature? How does one transform numbers and findings into a literary narrative? How does one create a simple story without 'dumbing down' the content?</p> <p>Why does the work of successful science communicators, such as Katharine Hayhoe, Dennis Overbye, Brian Greene, and Elizabeth Kolbert have wide appeal?</p> <p>What are they actually doing?</p> <p>Why did the late Nobelist Gunter Blobel tell his</p>	<p>Please be sure to read this op-ed, an eyewitness report on the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, for class. Please dissect the essay. Why do you think, if you do, it is successful? http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/18/magazine/close-encounter-of-the-human-kind.htmlLinks to an external sit</p> <p>And these examples of the oped form:</p> <p>As Smoke Darkens the Sky, the Future Becomes Clear, New York Times, June 8th, 2023</p> <p>Will Texas Blow Up It's Clean Energy Miracle, New York Times, May 15, 2023</p> <p>The Supreme Court is Crippling Environmental Protections, Where is Congress, New York Times, May 30, 2023</p> <p>What Ozempic Reveals about Desire, New York Times, June 6th, 2023</p> <p>I'm a black climate expert. Racism derails our efforts to save the planet.Links to an external site. https://www.cnn.com/2021/11/30/opinions/abortion-rights-supreme-court-stakes-dreifus/index.html</p> <p>Because op-eds involve argument, and a convincing argument at that, be sure to read this interview by your professor with political scientist/climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe that appeared on Undark. Dr. Hayhoe's common sense rules for presentations also apply to written pieces: https://undark.org/article/an-evangelist-for-climate-science-five-questions-for-katharine-hayhoe/Links to an external site.</p>	<p>Start work on a 750 opinion essay Due Date, Sunday, July 7th.</p>

	<p>post-docs, "If you can't explain it to your grandmother, don't bring it to me?"</p> <p>Second hour: What exactly is an op-ed? Are science op-eds different from other sorts of opinion pieces? What markets will print a science-based op-ed? What are the mechanics of submission? What is the difference between a short personal essay and an op-ed? Can one write a personal essay about a scientific topic? How?</p>	<p>Here's also an op-ed written by the former op-ed editor of the New York Times, Trish Hall. The uncomplicated advice remitted here comes from her Norton book, "Writing to Persuade: How to Bring People Over to Your Side": https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/25/opinion/sunday/writing-advice.htmlLinks to an external site.Links to an external site.</p> <p>Here's a link to a blogger who has excerpted William Zinnser's advice on good science writing; it's a nice primer: http://www.brainpickings.org/2015/05/27/william-zinnser-on-writing-well-science/Links to an external site.</p> <p>Additional guest speaker, one of the Editors from the Climate School's blog, "State of the Planet" will tell us about their editorial requirements.</p> <p>We will be hitting the ground running this semester!</p>	
7/9	<p>The Science-Based Op-Ed, Story Structure</p> <p>First Hour: Story Structure. We will run through Professor Anya Schiffrin's tips for journalistic writing. She is the director of Columbia SIPA's Technology, Media, and Communications Specialization.</p> <p>Second Hour: Identifying good vs. bad science writing.</p>	<p>Speaker: An editor from the School of Professional Studies, <i>Tomorrow's Minds at Work</i> blog.</p> <p>Claudia Dreifus's SPS Interview with Harvard's historian of science Naomi Oreskes:</p> <p>Distrusting Science: How We Got This Pandemic with Naomi Oreskes.</p>	<p>Assignment: continue with writing or rewriting a 750-word science-based op-ed that is targeted to a science-related topic.</p> <p>For a template on how to structure this and all other assignments, please look over the PowerPoint presentation by Anya Schiffrin</p> <p>It will be posted on CourseWorks/Canvas in the "Discussions" section.</p> <p>1: Rewrite your oped according to critiques offered by your instructors.</p> <p>Assignment 2: Line up source for your next assignment, the Q and A Interview.</p> <p>Due date Thursday, July ?</p>

7/9	<p>Op-eds Workshop and the Zen of the Interview.</p> <p>First hour: Discussion of student op-eds.</p> <p>Second hour: Prof. Dreifus will lead a discussion on interviewing. Check CourseWorks and your course packet for Claudia Dreifus' tips for interviewing.</p>	<p>Introduction to Scientific Conversations: Interviews on Science from the New York Times—please check Coursework.</p> <p>At NYTimes.com, you can find the following examples of short-form interviews by Claudia Dreifus:</p> <p>“A Conversation with Carl SafinaLinks to an external site.,” by Claudia Dreifus, New York Times</p> <p>“A Conversation with Stephen HawkingLinks to an external site.,” by Claudia Dreifus, New York Times</p> <p>An Interview with Frances Kissling, <i>The Nation</i> https://www.thenation.com/article/politics/roe-catholic-abortion/3500</p> <p>Examples of long-form Interviews</p> <p>Long forms with Kristy Red-Horse and Cassandra Extavour here in Quanta Magazine: https://www.quantamagazine.org/authors/claudiadreifus/Links to an external site.</p>	<p>Write a 1200 word Q and A with a scientist or a social scientist. You can alternately write this as a prose profile. Due date for the first draft:</p>
7/11	<p>Interviews</p> <p>We will spend this session reviewing the issues that have arisen in the production of this assignment. We will also discuss writing ledes.</p>		<p>Draft Date of Assignment, Sunday, 7/14</p>
7/16	<p>First hour: Discuss process of interviewing and transforming the conversation into a viable story with a beginning, middle and end. Some students will be asked to turn their interviews into prose-based profiles.</p> <p>We will also be launching ourselves into our final term project—which is a 2,000 word long-form narrative story that students will research and write.</p> <p>Second hour: Pitching and Query Letters.</p> <p>Reading: Tip Sheeting on Query Letters</p>		<p>Write a query letter for your long form. Pick an appropriate “market” or publication. Also, make a business plan or an outline for your projected long form. Due Date: Morning, 7/18</p>
7/18	<p>CATCHING UP AND MOVING FORWARD</p>	<p>Resources: Ivan Oransky asks procedural questions about science coverage during the</p>	<p>Go out into the field and collect the research</p>

	<p>First Hour—Finishing up discussions of outstanding opeds and interview assignments.</p> <p>Second Hour: Discussion of projected long forms and the query letters.</p>	<p>pandemic in the Columbia Journalism Review.</p> <p>Op-ed: Covering science at dangerous speeds.</p> <p>An investigative reporter who has covered COVID, explains how she works. https://www.theopennotebook.com/2020/06/23/stephanie-lee-unravels-the-conflicts-of-interest-behind-a-controversial-covid-19-study/</p> <p>Explaining a Difficult Scientific Concept. This story does it well. What is the reporter doing? https://www.washingtonpost.com/science/2020/06/29/coronavirus-mutation-science/Links to an external site.</p> <p>And what do you think of this? https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/07/climate/salt-lake-city-climate-disaster.html</p>	<p>material that will be the basis of your story. You have the next week to fully complete the task before you start writing. You will be asked to report in class on the progress and pitfalls you are encountering.</p>
7/23	<p>Interim reports on long forms.</p> <p>First hour: Workshop discussion on long form progress. You will be asked to report on your research.</p> <p>Second hour: Other forms of science communication— Letters to the Editor, Blogging and Substack.</p>		<p>Write a Letter to the Editor on a science or sustainability topic, perhaps something related to your long form. Send it off to either the New York Times, the Washington Post or the <i>Wall Street Journal</i>.</p>
7/25	<p>Long forms.</p> <p>First hour: review of pending assignments and Letters to the Editors.</p> <p>Second hour: Long forms—what works and what doesn't and why.</p>	<p>Optional Video: On the Ground Truth-telling: Editing and Reporting in the Midst of Pandemic: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqpWGo5V</p>	<p>Write a lede for your longform. Hang the lede onto your outline. Due: Thursday, AM 8/1</p>
7/30	<p>Workshopping your final term project.</p> <p>Question: how can other media be used to tell this same story?</p>	.	<p>Please read your colleagues' work on CourseWorks and bring your comments and ideas for them.</p>
8/01	<p>In class, we will be discussing the first drafts</p>		<p>Incorporate the notes and critiques of your instructors and classmates into a final draft, due Wednesday the 9th in the evening. Please fill out a course evaluation on Courseworks.</p>
8/06	<p>Celebration/Summation.</p>		<p>Students are invited to Professor Dreifus' home in the Lincoln Center</p>

			district for a “Dutch Treat” supper and semester summation. Second draft should have been filed yesterday.
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Readings

Required Reading:

A Tactical Guide to Science Journalism: Lessons from the Field, Deborah Blum, Ashley Smart, Tom Zeller, Jr.

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/a-tactical-guide-to-science-journalism-9780197551509?cc=us&lang=en&Links> to an external site.

Recommended Readings:

“Am I Making Myself Clear: A Scientists Guide to Talking to the Public,” Cornelia Dean

“Writing to Persuade: How to Bring People Over to Your Side,” Trish Hall

“Writer’s Market, 2023,” *Writer’s Digest Books*

“The Craft of Science Writing,” edited by Siri Carpenter

“The By-Line Bible: Get Published in Five Weeks,” Susan Shapiro

“Merchants of Doubt,” Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway

“Why Trust Science,” Naomi Oreskes.

“Sustainability Management: Lessons from and for New York City, America, and the Planet,” Steven A. Cohen

“The Wisdom of Plagues: Lessons from 25 Years of Covering Pandemics,” Donald G. McNeil, Jr.

“Birding to Change the World,” Trish O’Kane

Books:

A Most Remarkable Creature by Jonathan Meiburg

Under a White Sky by Elizabeth Kolbert

Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer

Darwin Comes to Town by Menno Schilthuizen

Underland by Robert Macfarlane

Entangled Life by Merlin Sheldrake

Op-Eds:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/14/opinion/climate-disasters.html>Links to an external site.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/24/opinion/coronavirus-vaccine-cost-pfizer-moderna.html>Links to an external site.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/26/opinion/sunday/coronavirus-alive-dead.html>Links to an external site.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/19/opinion/covid-symptoms-gorillas.html>Links to an external site.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/26/opinion/bears-ears-trump-biden.html>Links to an external site.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/11/opinion/climate-change-himalayas.html>Links to an external site.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/19/opinion/covid-dementia.html>Links to an external site.

Longforms:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/10/magazine/school-reopenings-rhode-island.html>Links to an external site.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/16/magazine/laos-agent-orange-vietnam-war.html>Links to an external site.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/10/magazine/the-lawyer-who-became-duponts-worst-nightmare.html>Links to an external site.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/23/magazine/climate-migration.html>Links to an external site.

Interview with Alan Alda:<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pwFJIQuaIPM>Links to an external site.

Filing protocol: Please always file your stories with a headline and a byline. In addition to posting your story into the appropriate file on Courseworks, be sure to send Claudia Dreifus and the TA a Word copy via email.

Your helpful commentary under stories that have been filed on CourseWorks is appreciated. Your notes and comments help build community among the class members.

Library reserves:

Some feature writing sources used in my magazine writing class will be posted within the "library reserves" feature of CourseWorks.

Though these are not science stories per se, they may be of use to you in looking at story structure and detail.

Students can also access hundreds of magazines and newspapers for free through the Columbia University library system.

Access to the New York Times and the Washington Post, highly necessary for this course, is also available through our library. A guest speaker from the library will be attending one session to show students how to make use of its many resources.

Suggested publications to read:

The New York Times, Tuesday and Sunday, at minimum

The Washington Post

The Wall Street Journal

Quanta

Scientific American

Undark

ProPublica

Stat

Climate Action News

Yale360

Inside Climate News

State of The Planet: The Climate School publishes a blog/online magazine, “State of the Planet” with much interesting news of E.I. research and faculty. The weekly column of the SUMA program’s founder, Steven Cohen, is posted there. What Professor Cohen has managed to do is develop a regular column on sustainability issues that is read by thousands of interested citizens. We’d like you to check in with State of the Planet each week and study how Professor Cohen produces his feature. What makes it different and interesting?

Please keep in mind, if any of your coursework is publishable or nearly so, State of the Planet editors would like to have a look at it. They will work with you on editing. Many students from this class have published there,

Media that students in claudia dreifus’s classes have published in: The Atlantic.com, New York Times/Science Times, New York Times/The Local, New York Times/The Green Blog, Consilience, The National (UAE), the Guardian (London), Quartz.com, State of the Planet, the Bronx News, Communique, The Morningside Post, the Martha’s Vineyard Times, the Trenton Times, Fatherly, Newsday, the New York Daily News, the West Side Rag, I Love the Upper West Side, Conservation, and the Huffington Post.

Diversity in reporting: The ideas and accomplishments of under-represented groups have often been neglected in both the world of science and in the reporting of it.

One step is to self-correct by seeking to be more inclusive in sourcing your science stories. The Open Notebook offers these suggestions.

<https://www.theopennotebook.com/finding-diverse-sources-for-science-stories/Links> to an external site.

Biographical notes on the professor:

I am a freelance science writer for Quanta, Undark, Smithsonian and Scientific American. For many years, I produced the "Conversation with..." feature in the Tuesday edition of Science Times/the New York Times. I still contribute articles to the various sections of the New York Times.

I also have produced and moderated the Science Talks series at the 92nd Street Y.

You can access samples of my journalism on my website: www.claudiadreifus.com

This class was initiated in 2008 as a way of teaching scientists stronger communication skills. It was one of the first university-based classes, if not the first, with this goal.

The American Society of Journalists and Authors has honored me with a "career achievement award," and Sigma Xi, the National Honorary Society of Research Scientists has made me an honorary member for "transforming" how science is covered in my New York Times interview column.

My two trade books about interviewing, “Interview,” and “Scientific Conversations,” are used in journalism courses worldwide.

Jennifer Doudna, the discoverer of CRISPR gene editor and a Nobel Prize winner told the Boston Globe that Scientific Conversations was her favorite summer science read in 2020.

Here’s what she said: “This is an awesome collection of 38 interviews, published originally in the Science Times section of the New York Times, that captures the wonder and excitement of scientific discovery. As an outstanding journalist and a relative outsider to science, Dreifus elicits from her subjects the passion, frustration, inspiration and,

ultimately, the joy of doing science. Her writing reminds me of the work of John McPhee: deep and expansive with a sense of fun. A great read!"

My classes have had consistently high student ratings.

Through the SUMA program, I also give occasional workshops on op-ed writing and also host open forums on science communication topics. Alumni of the class are welcome to register for both.. Alumni of this class are also eligible to audit future classes, if and when there are openings and space. Outstanding alumni can be considered for assistantships of future courses.

I will also be giving a SUMA course in the Fall strictly focused on op-ed and blog writing.

Last year, SPS honored me with a Dean's award for excellence in teaching.

Biographical notes on the teaching assistant: TBD

A note on timely filing: In order for students' writing to be graded and considered in time for Tuesday evening, it is vital that assignments be filed on CourseWorks by Sunday at noon, FIRM.

This requirement is not aimed at ruining students' weekends, but to give the professor enough time to evaluate the entire class problems and progress and construct a lecture tailored to the group's needs.

Another note on form: As in journalism, all filings must be clean, grammatical and as far as possible, in "ready to print" form. That means, of course, with a headline and a by-line.

Midweek email inquiries: Though available in emergency situations, your instructor and teaching assistant wish to stress that this is not an e-course. It is a lecture-based workshop. We would prefer that you use office hour appointments for your questions about assignments and to take careful notes during lectures, where key pointers will be covered. Should you have an excused absence from the lecture, it is your obligation to confer with a colleague to obtain that session's notes. We also urge you to make use of the tip sheets and hand-outs we will be distributing. At the end of the semester, you will have accumulated the equivalent of a textbook; it is something you can reference in the future.

A separate note on pace: We will move as quickly or as slowly as the class' progress requires. That, of course, means the schedule below is not set in stone. As that late 20th century philosopher John Lennon had it: "Life is what happens when you're making other plans." Please consider this syllabus provisional. It is very much a work in progress that is subject to change.

Keep in mind: Be aware that this course is rigorous and involves a serious commitment from registrants. We don't want to kid you about that.

University-wide science communication: Your professor encourages you to publish with some of Columbia's excellent media outlets--State of the Planet, SIPA News, The SPS Blog, "Tomorrow's Minds At Work," Consilience, The Columbia Spectator, Columbia News, The Public Policy Review.

This syllabus is not a fundamental text: Because lectures are based on your writing and the progress you've made, we may not be moving at the pace indicated in the syllabus. Please be aware that our schedule may prove more fluid than what is indicated here.

Columbia integrity: Please familiarize yourself with the proper methods of citation and attribution. The School provides some useful resources online; we strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself with these various styles before conducting your research and writing.

As stated in your Sustainability Management registration packet, Columbia University functions at the highest levels of integrity and demands the same from its students. It goes without saying that plagiarism, "recycling" of previously produced works, and the employment of intellectual products created by others will not be tolerated.

Robotic technologies: This class is about sharpening the writing and reporting skills of the registered students. The tasks that are assigned are key to that process. Therefore, the deployment of robotic technologies such as ChatGPT is strictly forbidden. Bottom logical line: if a robot has written your assignment, you have not.

School Policies and Expectations:

Accessibility Statement – I want you to succeed in this course. Contact disability@columbia.edu for learning accommodations.

Names/Pronouns – You deserve to be addressed in a manner that reflects your identity. You are welcome to tell me your pronoun(s) and/or name (if different from University records) at any time, either in person or via email.

Discrimination – We embrace the diversity of gender, gender identity & expression, sex, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, national origin, age, religion, disability status, family status, socioeconomic background, and other visible and non-visible identities. Columbia University does not tolerate unlawful discrimination, discriminatory harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, or sexual exploitation and all such conduct is forbidden by Columbia University Policy.

Duty to Report – You deserve a University community free from discrimination, harassment, and gender-based misconduct including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation. It is therefore University policy to require Columbia faculty and staff to report to EOAA any instance or allegation of prohibited conduct involving any undergraduate or any graduate student that is disclosed to, observed by, or otherwise known to that employee. This requirement to report is in place to help ensure that students are provided appropriate resources and to allow the University to mitigate harm to our community.

Confidential Resources - There are confidential resources on campus who do not have a Duty to Report, including:

- Sexual Violence Response & Rape Crisis/Anti-Violence Support Center (SVR)
- Ombuds Office
- Medical Services
- University Counseling and Psychological Services
- University Pastoral Counseling
- Columbia Office of Disability Services

University employees working in a confidential capacity will not report information shared with them.

Inclusion - In the M.S. in Sustainability Management program, faculty and staff are committed to the creation and maintenance of “inclusive learning” spaces – classrooms and other places of learning where you will be treated with respect and dignity, and where all individuals are provided equitable opportunities to participate, contribute, and succeed. In our classroom, all students are welcome regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, disabilities, religion, regional background, veteran status, citizenship status, nationality—we value the diverse identities and experiences that each of us bring to the collective learning experience.

In our Sustainability Management K4100 classroom, all students are welcome regardless of race/ethnicity, gender identities, gender expressions, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, disabilities, religion, regional background, Veteran status, citizenship status, nationality and other diverse identities that we each bring to class.