

Course description for the ClimBEco course “Communicating Scientific Research” 11-15 March 2013, Lund University

A PhD level course to develop the skills needed to be an effective scientific communicator.

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Course outline

Day 1 – Why communicate science

Day 2 – Developing a communication toolkit

Day 3 – The media ecosystem

Day 4 – Public outreach

Day 5– Creating a video and project presentations

Description

In an increasingly linked and networked world, scientists need to be effective communicators to many different audiences, from grant agencies to scientific peers, public audiences and the media. While some people have an inherent ability to communicate science well, this does not come naturally to all of us, and just like other aspects of scientific work, **science communication is a skill that can be learnt and developed**. In this PhD level course students will learn about the common skills that all effective science communicators have: identifying and characterizing the target audience; distilling the relevant information to be communicated; effective ways to deliver and receive information; and the variety of techniques and media by which scientific information is communicated.

Course Content

The course will be hosted by three young scientists and will have additional contributions from several national and international experts on communication.

The **five day course will cover the following topics**

- 1) Elevator talks – how to distill information down to the essential points.
- 2) Analysing and preparing for communication – how to identify your audience and their knowledge base, what methods and technology are available for communication.
- 3) Presenting a confident you – how to talk with confidence, having a confident composure during communication.
- 4) The media ecosystem – how people encounter science in their everyday lives (radio, TV, newspapers, blogs, podcasts, social media, websites).
- 5) How does one become a public science communicator ?
- 6) Creating content to communicate your science

The nature of this subject will require active participation, interaction and creativity. Students will be required to communicate with different groups of

people in different contexts during the course to practice and develop these skills. The **activities that participants will undertake include:**

- Creating an 'elevator talk' about your own research.
- Designing PowerPoint slides to present data.
- Writing a newspaper article.
- Being interviewed.
- Writing on-line content (blog, webpage, wiki).
- Creating a short video about your work.

In addition to these group activities, students will be given 1.5 hours every day to **develop a single course project of their choice**. The type of course projects can be one of the following:

- a webpage;
- a blog;
- a podcast;
- a public presentation to non-experts; or
- an article for a popular science magazine.

Assessment

The grades will be determined by the level of quality and participation in the practical activities and course project. The grades are Fail, Pass and Pass with distinction.

Course Material

All course material will be available online through the course website, or given out during the course. Each student will receive a copy of the course text book at the start of the course.

Nancy Baron 2010. *Escape from the ivory tower: a guide to making your science matter*. Island Press, Washington, D.C.

Students are required to prepare several short projects before the start of the course, which will have to be submitted and uploaded through the course website. We encourage students to bring items such as laptops, smart phones, tablet computers, and digital cameras with a video function to the course to create content.

Application

Places in this course are limited to 20. The course is open for all students, but admission priority will be given to ClimBEco PhD students.

Application for the course will be on a competitive basis and should be submitted online through this [link](#) before 20th January, 2013.