Business and Technical Writing 342: Science Writing

Michael Goeller

Course Texts

Deborah Blum and Mary Knudson, eds., *A Field Guide for Science Writers*

James Gleick, ed. *The Best American Science Writing 2000*

A copy of *The New York Times, Science Times* section, due in class every Wednesday

Various current online sources, to be assigned.

Supplemental Texts

Do not buy these books; anything you need from them will be provided.

Sharon Friedman, Sharon Dunwoody, and Carol Rogers, eds., *Communicating Uncertainty: Media Coverage of New and Controversial Science*


Jane Gregory and Steve Miller, *Science in Public: Communication, Culture, and Credibility*

Tentative Class Schedule

**Week 1**
- Introduction to the course
- Writing sample and class survey
- *A Field Guide for Science Writers*, Chapter 1
- A Review of Online Sources of Science Information
- Online source review assignment-rough draft

**Week 2**
- *A Field Guide for Science Writers*, Chapters 2, 3, and 4
- Jonathan Weiner, "Lord of the Flies," BASW, 30-44
- Library session at Chang Library
- Discussion of current articles from online and print sources
- Review of online sources of science information due


Week 3
A Field Guide for Science Writers, Chapters 5, 11, and 12
Peter Galison, "Einstein's Clocks: The Place of Time," BASW, 213-238
News brief assignment for peer review
News brief due
Groups choose topics for statistical inquiry presentation

Week 4
Supplemental material from News and Numbers, Chapters 1 through 5 (pp. 3-63),
excerpts from Communicating Uncertainty
A Field Guide for Science Writers, Chapter 13
Sheryl Gay Stolberg, "The Biotech Death of Jesse Gelsinger," BASW, 45-56.
Group work on statistical inquiry presentation

Week 5
Collaborative exercise on group topics, with oral presentations
National Science Board, "Public Attitudes and Public Understanding" (online)
Interview practicum / partner interviews
Interview writing exercise and partner response
Research and read a recent publication by the faculty member you will interview.

Week 6
A Field Guide for Science Writers, Chapters 10, 14, and 15
Sample interview-based articles as assigned
Individual Interview Assignment: Interview a Rutgers Science Faculty Member

Week 7
Book choice due for the book review assignment
Midterm assignment due--transcript + 6 page story based on interview

Week 8
A Field Guide for Science Writers, Chapters 6 through 8
Short news summary due, summarizing the latest news on the topic of your chosen book
More work on the book review assignment
Sample book reviews from online and print sources

Week 9
Connecting ideas and recognizing paradigms: keys to good feature story writing
Steven Johnson, Emergence: The Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities, and Software
Ted Anton, excerpts from Bold Science: Seven Scientists Who are Changing our World
Science Feature Story idea proposed
Discussion of science feature and news stories as assigned

Week 10
Peer revision on book review
Research on Feature Story for peer discussion
Short News Summary (based on research) assignment

Week 11
Book review due
Sample student papers examined and discussed
Science feature stories as assigned

Weeks 12-14
Peer review of Feature Story assignment
Peer review of portfolio papers
Final Feature Story projects and portfolios due