ENVS 6900
Graduate Student Publishing Seminar

Course Outline

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Office hours: (as announced in class)
Date/Time/Room: Tuesdays, 10:30-12:20, BNR 360
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The purpose of the course is to (1) prepare you to publish professionally in the field of environment and society, and (2) actually have you do it.

You will discover that writing for publication, by seriously forcing you to think precisely and meaningfully, improves your critical thinking skills. Thus not only is this a course in writing for publication, it is a course in improving your thinking skills.

The course will teach you the kinds of outlets for publishing your professional writing, from letters-to-the-editor to scientific papers. The course will teach you about the guidelines for preparing submissions to the various outlets. The course will teach you how to prepare a piece that has a good chance of being published. The course will demand that you write and submit pieces (largely after this term is over but before you graduate). The course will not prepare you in grammar and rhetoric; that you should already be good in. (It’s correct, by the way, to end a sentence with a preposition.)

The format of the course is that of a seminar. The class will read readings that are on electronic course reserve, and assigned a week ahead of class meetings. On the day of the class, for each reading I will pick at random someone in the class to guide the discussion of the reading. Class members will ask questions, class members will offer answers, and class members will comment on the answers. At times I will add my opinions and advice.

The course draws on all ENVS faculty members. They are available to help you come up with good topics to write pieces on. Simply ask a faculty member if he or she would be willing to help you. If the answer is “yes” (as it should be), set up an office meeting.

The course begins right now, first day of class. It ends when you graduate, at which date you will receive a letter grade, A to F. Your grade will be a function of two things. Half of your grade will be based on your class attendance, on “other expectations” mentioned below, and on the quality of your oral performance in class this term (as judged by me). And half will be based on your performance submitting pieces and having them accepted for publication, from now to the time you graduate. I and several other faculty members will judge the kinds of pieces
you submit and succeed in publishing (from letters to the editor, to book reviews, to research articles). Every time you submit a piece for publication, or have a piece published, (1) send me an e-mail telling me, (2) put a copy in your personal publication portfolio, and (3) give a copy to the secretary in the departmental office for her to put in the publication portfolio we keep there.

**The course ends eight weeks before you graduate.** Tell me eight weeks before you plan to graduate and I will circulate the contents of your folder to certain faculty (who have agreed to judge the quality of your successes) to have them grade your performance. With this counting as half the input to your final grade, and the quality of your class participation the rest, I will give you a grade for the course. Until then, your grade will be an incomplete.

**The course has other expectations.** I expect you to attend all classes. I expect you to arrive on time. I expect you to have read the assignments before class. I expect you to contribute to the class discussion.

**The course has no written exams and no final exam.**

**The course has one or more guest lecturers.** For example, Susanne Clement, Director of Quinney Library, will educate you on certain topics that will serve your professional writing, such as finding outlets for submitting your writing to, avoiding plagiarism in writing, and not libeling people.

**The course readings are on course reserve.** The readings are grouped in sets. There will be a set of readings assigned for each class period. They are listed below, and you must read them before the class period they are assigned to. They are numbered in order – 1, 2, 3, 4, . . . – but that doesn’t mean that the set of readings numbered 3, for instance, is for the 3rd class meeting. Each time we meet I will tell you when our next meeting is and which set of readings we will address. There are no textbooks to buy.

**The readings are on electronic course reserve.** At our first class meeting I will explain how to access them.

**There are two DVDs (videos) we will watch and discuss in class:**

*Kevin Phillips on his Writing Habits* (26 minutes).

*Steven Pinker on Writing* (36 minutes).

Developing a blog (web log) and writing pieces for it is another way of publishing your ideas. I encourage you to visit my blog, The Saunterer, to see how I do this. It’s at: www.comesaunter.com

At the end of this course outline is a section called “Sample List of Magazine Outlets for Your Magazine Writing.”

(Many thanks to Patsy Palacios for making the pdfs for the readings and getting them into electronic reserves.)
# 1 Set of Readings

In this set are readings A-1, A-2, and A-3, which are to help you understand why journal articles (scientific papers) must exist, and what they are made up of.

A-1.


A-2.


A-3.


# 2 Set of Readings

Reading A-4 is a journal article I picked at random. Read it for its structure and how it reports on discoveries of knowledge. That it is about hiking has no relevance for this course. That it has structure and logic and evidence leading to discoveries does.

Readings A-5, A-6, and A-7 are short journals articles called “Notes.” Ask yourself, when can research be reported in the note format, and when does it require the longer journal article format?

Reading A-8 is called a “Forum Article” in the journal in which it appears. In this case that means it is an article adapted from a conference. How in structure and substance does it differ from a Note?

Reading A-9 is on getting a title for your published research. Prepare what you think would make better titles for the articles below, and be prepared to say why.

A-4.


A-5.


A-6.

*Testing a Self-Classification Measure of Recreation Specialization Among Anglers.* M. D.

A-7.

A-8.

A-9.

# 3 Set of Readings

Reading A-10 is about how to write book reviews. Readings A-11, A-12 and A-13 are three illustrative book reviews. For this course, consider doing a book review. We’ll talk about the strategies, tactics, and mechanics in class.

A-10.

A-11.

A-12.
The Power and the Glory. (Review by Arik Hesseldahl in Bloomberg Businessweek. April 12, 2010.)


# 4 Set of Readings

Readings A-14 through A-17 are examples of short magazine articles. Readings A-18, A-19, and A-20 are examples of Op-ed pieces, which are published in newspapers. Op-ed is short for “opposite the editorial page” of a newspaper, where it usually appears, expressing the reasoned views of an author(s).

A-14.

A-15.  
– A Penny Saved. Victoria Stern. The Scientist. March 2010

A-16.  

A-17.  

A-18.  

A-19.  
ORV-friendly Shoshone Trail System Back in Under the Radar, by Charles Romesburg. Ogden Standard-Examiner. Thursday, September 11, 2003. (This piece’s text is the same as that of the above piece.)

A-20.  
Bush Administration Is Abandoning Commitment to Our Forests, by J. Steitz and H.C. Romesburg. Ogden Standard-Examiner, May 8, 2002. (The last column is cut off. See the Internet posting for the uncut article.)

# 5 Set of Readings

These are separate readings, all in the pdf A-21, on the instructions various journals have for authors who want to submit articles, notes, book reviews, and the like. Every journal has a web site where the instructions, sometimes called “author guidelines” appears.

A-21.  
Journal Instructions to Authors  
– for PloS Biology  
– for Society & Natural Resources  
– for Rangeland Ecology & Management  
– for Journal of Applied Ecology  
– for Journal of Park and Recreation Administration  
– for Journal of Political Ecology  
– for Environmental Management  
– for Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment  
– for Weather, Climate, and Society  
– for Rangelands
# 6 Set of Readings

These are separate readings, all in the pdf A-22, of examples of letters to the editor, most to newspapers, one to a magazine. This term in this course you will write and submit at least one letter to the editor (more is better).

**A-22.**

*Turn lights down to light sky up,* by Charles Romesburg and Greg Salt. The Herald Journal (11/19/99).

*Return Milky Way to our children,* by Charles Romesburg. The Herald Journal (10/10/02)

*No conscience in dugway plan,* by Charles Romesburg. The Herald Journal (11/22/02).


Here are various letters to The New York Times on burning trash etc. (4-18-10)

Here are various letters to The New York Times Book Review on Covering Campaigns, etc. (4-4-2010)

Here are various letters to The New York Times Book Review on Narcissim’s Discontents, etc. (2-21-2010)

Here are two letters to Science about Plagiarism. (8/14/09).

*Why Stories Matter.* The Scientist. December 2009. (Read both letters for style and for the information they have about writing.)


# 7 Set of Readings
Readings A-23 through A-30 contain various advice applicable to science writing.

A-23.  


A-25.  

– Conventions of Scientific Authorship. Pardis Sabeti. Science Careers. (5/7/10)

A-27.  
– Writing for Broadcast. From Sound Reporting: The NPR Guide to Audio Journalism. J. Kern. The University of Chicago Press. 2008. (This piece applies as well to writing for paper publication.)


A-29.  

A-30.  
Grant-Writing Gurus.

# 8 Set of Readings

The three readings, A-31, A-32, and A-33 present ethical issues in publishing research. Although the first two are directed to publishing medical research, they apply to publishing research in all fields.

A-31.  
– Chapter 2 - Why Bother with Medical Journals and Whether They are Honest? From The Trouble with Medical Journals. R. Smith. The Royal Society of Medicine Press. 2006.

A-32.  
– Chapter 7 - Peer Review: A Flawed Process at the Heart of Science and Journals. From


#9 Set of Readings


B-5. This material shows from start to finish how I went about getting published the article “Pedagogical Positive of the Surface-to-Volume Ratio” in the American Biology Teacher journal.

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Sample List of Magazine Outlets for Your Magazine Writing

Susanne Clement, Director of Quinney Library, prepared the list below to give you an idea of the scope of magazines you can write articles for. She will explain in class how to find magazines for placing your pieces.


· Isles Works!. United States. Isles, Inc. Newsletter; Consumer. Active.


· Peak and Prairie.United States.Sierra Club, Rocky Mountain Chapter.Newsletter; Consumer.Active.197?.


· Sierra: exploring, enjoying and protecting the planet.United States.Sierra Club.ISSN: 0161-7362.Magazine; Consumer.Active.1893.


