

Syllabus 2019: Creative Conservation Messaging (EBIO 6100/MUSM 6110)

Description: In our currently politically-divided world, science itself has become a political hot bed for misunderstanding and misrepresentation. Some part of this situation is lack of clear communication by scientific experts to the public. As scientists and museum professionals in training, we are taught our statistical, scientific, and work skills without a direct emphasis on adequately reaching a wider public. And unfortunately, many, if not most, science or conservation messages are heard only by those that already consider science and conservation important. How do we reach the public that doesn't agree with us or distrusts scientific discourse?

In this class we will practice various types of public messaging aimed across the political spectrum from personal statements of research or conservation to newspaper ads and science blogs. Many important groups we would like to reach with science information are instantly turned off by scientists either because of differences in political or financial ideologies or because the methods of presentation are too preachy, abstract, scientifically detailed, or just plain boring. Together we will explore through weekly readings, podcasts, book chapters, etc. why certain public groups understand different messaging based on their core values and interests. Each participant will be responsible for finding and disseminating to the class valuable sources of data on this topic to help clarify for everyone an aspect of improved communication, techniques for reaching a wider audience, underpinnings of differences in opinion, and application of those methods currently employed around the world. Each week we will read/listen/watch those participant-provided materials and briefly discuss the key points to apply. Then we will practice applying our messaging in individual, pair, and group projects.

Instructor/Facilitator: Dr. Christy M. McCain, Associate Professor in EBIO & Curator of Vertebrates in CU Museum, christy.mccain@colorado.edu, Office Phone 1-303-735-1016, Office MCOL E190C.

Seminar: Wednesday 2-5 pm (depending on the # of students and presentations)

Location: Museum Collections/Bruce Curtis Bldg (MCOL) E280

Readings:

- I. Book: **The Influential Mind: What the Brain Reveals About Our Power to Change Others** by Tali Sharot (available new and used on Amazon for \$13 to \$17).
- II. Other readings/videos: various chapters, articles, popular literature, podcasts, etc. on communication of science. Each participant will be responsible for providing a week of reading or pertinent material for class.

Project-based class: the class is a hands-on, practical seminar. There will be alternating weeks of group activities and presentations with peer-to-peer feedback. There will a vote on the top newspaper ad and top radio ad that will then be run on the local outlet of your choice with funding.

Grading: 90-100% = A; 80-89% = B; 70-79% = C; 60-69% = D; below 60% = F. Borderline cases = "+" & "-".

Graded Activity:

Weekly Participation (20 pts each)	300 points
Your week(s) of class materials	50 points
Presentations (50 pts each)	500 points
<u>Final Presentation</u>	<u>150 points</u>
Total	1000 points

DAY	EBIO 6100/MUSM 6110: CREATIVE CONSERVATION MESSAGING	HOMEWORK
8/28	Introduction to Science & Conservation Messaging: What are your goals in science messaging? Are we reaching our audience? How can we improve? Introduction to the narrative through videos & discussion	Readings & Prepare Personal Story
9/4	Personal Storytelling I: 5 min personal story. Individual practice & peer feedback. Discussion: what worked and what didn't? How would you revise your story?	Readings & Prepare Website Bio
9/11	Personal Storytelling II: 400-word website bio. Use a message box to clarify your message whether it be research or personal. Individual practice & peer feedback. Discussion: Messaging to the Right. Videos and reading materials on reaching various audience and successful strategies	Readings & Message box for Research Blog to the Right
9/18	Research Blog to the Right: Pair feedback on message box and ideas for addressing a conservative audience. Discussion of (a) how can we more effectively use the message box & (2) ideas in readings for new successful strategies.	Readings & Prepare Research Blog to the Right
9/25	Research Blog to the Right: Science Buffs STEM Blog Presentation. Pair feedback on research blog for a conservative audience. Ideas to address in a revision—writing & persuasiveness for the audience.	Readings / Videos / Podcasts
10/2	Pair Project I: Effective Letter Writing to editor of a newspaper or magazine, or to a politician Examples, discussion, and pair work time	Readings & Prepare Letter/Op-Ed
10/9	Pair Project I: Letter presentations & discussion of what was successful. Discussion of potential outlets. Pair to pair feedback, revision, group feedback.	Prep Letter & Readings
10/16	Guest Speaker: Sara Thomas, Director, Activism & Outreach at World Wildlife Fund: Effective Ad campaigns and discussion of readings & applications [or similar TBD]	Readings / Videos / Podcasts
10/23	Group Project III: Science or Conservation Ad for Radio. Pairs or threes, one or both outlets, TBD Examples, discussion, and group work time	Readings / Videos / Podcasts
10/30	Group Project III: Science or Conservation Ad for Radio presentations Each group presents, group-to-group feedback, discussion	Prep Ad & Readings
11/6	Science Stand Up Comedy Training Guest comedians from <i>Science Riot</i>	Readings

DAY	EBIO 6100/MUSM 6110: CREATIVE CONSERVATION MESSAGING	HOMEWORK
11/13	Practice Research Media Interviews or Practice w/ Blogs or Podcasts [TBD as a class]	Readings / Videos / Podcasts
11/20	Final Projects I —Design your own final science or conservation outreach activity for a specific target audience (e.g., outreach exhibit, infographic, public speaking, radio spot, art exhibit) Examples, discussion, and group or solo work time	Readings / Videos / Podcasts
11/27	Winter Break—no class	
12/4	Final Projects II —Initial peer-to-peer feedback, discussion and work time	Prep Project & Readings
12/11	Final Presentations & Celebration of a Job Well Done	
Final	If needed to complete all of the presentations...	

CU BOULDER REQUIRED SYLLABUS STATEMENTS:

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

HONOR CODE

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to [the academic integrity policy](#). Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, resubmission, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code Council as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#).

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND/OR RELATED RETALIATION

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. CU's Sexual Misconduct Policy prohibits sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, intimate partner abuse (dating or domestic violence), stalking or related retaliation. CU Boulder's Discrimination and Harassment Policy prohibits discrimination, harassment or related retaliation based on race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct under either policy should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127. Information about the OIEC, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation can be found at the [OIEC website](#).

ACCOMMODATION FOR DISABILITIES

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#) (www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/students). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website and discuss your needs with your professor.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, *{{insert your procedures here}}*
See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.