

## **Environmental and Science Journalism**

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Hussman School of Journalism and Media

MEJO 560, Spring 2022

MW 2:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m., Carroll Hall Room 128

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[linden@unc.edu](mailto:linden@unc.edu) Office Hours: Monday, 3:30 - 4:30

### **Course Description & Goals**

The purpose of this course is to teach an appreciation of environmental and science journalism and provide you with skills to report on environmental and science news for a variety of media, principally print or text, but also video and audio. As a participant in this course, you'll learn the following:

- How to find news value in scientific research reports.
- How to integrate scientific statistics from source materials into news reports.
- How to research, report and write environmental and science news stories for popular media.

### **Special Health Policy**

For at least the first three weeks of the semester, class will be online because of the ongoing COVID pandemic. Zoom link for the course is:

<https://unc.zoom.us/j/92466210763?pwd=MHhaZUFFFT3lxZGhvK2N2TDBZdXhscz09>

The Zoom link also is located in Sakai->Resources->Zoom link. The Zoom link will be active for the entire semester.

When on Zoom, please have your camera on.

When the class resumes in person, please DO NOT attend in person if you feel sick for any reason. If you're not able to attend class because of health concerns, please let me know in advance of the class session. As per the UNC directive, please wear a mask whenever you're in class, in Carroll Hall or in any University building.

### **Reading**

Readings for the course include a classic book on writing well, a primer about science writing from masters in the field, a book from a leading environmental journalist about the "spillover" of viruses

from animals to humans, a text on writing medical and health stories and a novel that won the Pulitzer Prize in fiction. Please complete all reading assignments before the appropriate classroom discussions. In addition to the list below, I'll supply additional source materials and articles from various publications. Most of the following books are available at the UNC student store and copies of some of the books will be on reserve in the Park Library (second floor) in the School of Journalism & Media. Students should also consult the AP Stylebook (<http://www.apstylebook.com/>) for proper style and usage for all written assignments.

1) Blum, Deborah, Mary Knudson & Robin Marantz Henig, editors. A Field Guide for Science Writers (Second Edition) (<https://www.nasw.org/bookstore/field-guide-science-writers-official-guide-national-association-science-writers>), Oxford University Press (paperback), © 2005, ISBN: 0-19-5174992 (tel:0-19-5174992), \$19.95. (Electronic copy in Sakai->Course Reserves)

2 Linden, Tom. The New York Times Reader: Health & Medicine (<https://www.amazon.com/New-York-Times-Reader-Timescollege/dp/1604264829>), CQ Press, © 2011, 287 pp., ISBN:978-1604264821, used copies on Amazon from \$4.75. (Electronic copies of individual chapters in Sakai->Resources)

3) Powers, Richard. The Overstory (<https://www.amazon.com/Overstory-Novel-Richard-Powers/dp/039335668X>), W. W. Norton & Company, © 2019, 512 pp., ISBN:978-0393356687, \$15.95.

4) Quammen, David. Spillover (<https://www.amazon.com/Spillover-Animal-Infections-Human-Pandemic-ebook/dp/B00856PC4K>), W. W. Norton & Company, © 2012, 594 pp., ISBN:978-0393346619, \$18.95.

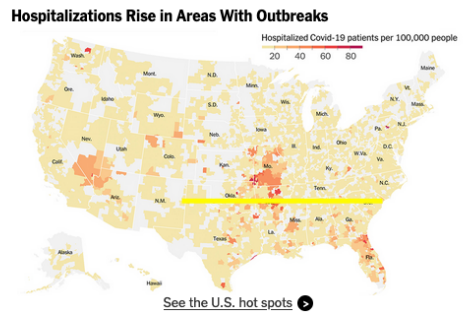
5) Zinsser, William. On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction (30th Anniversary Edition) (<https://www.amazon.com/Writing-Well-30th-Anniversary-Nonfiction/dp/0060891548>), Collins, © 2006, 336 pp., ISBN: 978-0060891541, \$17.00.

Assigned reading will also include several stories from both the Washington Post and the New York Times. See the left-hand column of the following site to gain free access to both publications. <https://guides.lib.unc.edu/news-Stories/current-News> (<https://guides.lib.unc.edu/news-Stories/current-News>).

Also, throughout the semester on various dates we'll be discussing articles from the Tuesday Science Times section of the New York Times. To view stories under discussion in class, go to [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) and look in the upper left-hand corner for the day's date. Click on "Today's Paper" and then select the date for the NYT that you want... in this case Tuesday, Sept. 21. There you can view the stories in that day's Science Times **print** section.

**LIVE**  
**In Reversal, C.D.C. to Recommend Some Vaccinated People Wear Masks Indoors**

- The agency is expected to reverse course on a decision made two months ago, saying that vaccinated people should wear masks indoors in certain areas of the country.
- Details are expected later today. The change follows surges in areas with low vaccination rates and reports of breakthrough infections with the Delta variant.



### As Cases Rise, a New Feeling Spreads Among the Vaccinated: Anger

Frustrated by the prospect of a new surge, many Americans are blaming the unvaccinated. A tougher stance may backfire, some experts warn.

**More sleeping, less grooming: See how the pandemic changed the way we spent our time in 2020.**

|            | United States   |               | World           |               | U.S. vaccinations > |  | Global vaccinations > |  |
|------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------------|--|-----------------------|--|
|            | Avg. on Jul. 26 | 14-day change | Avg. on Jul. 26 | 14-day change | At least one dose   |  | Fully vaccinated      |  |
| New cases  | 56,635          | +144%         | 542,058         | +21%          | Total pop. 57%      |  | 49%                   |  |
| New deaths | 275             | +7%           | 10,038          | +24%          | 18 and up 69%       |  | 60%                   |  |

**Sign up for updates** Get a daily email with Covid updates for [places you choose](#), [Global cases](#), [Japan](#), [U.K.](#), [Florida](#), [Louisiana](#), [Hospitals](#), [Vaccine development](#), [Choose your own places to track](#), [More+](#)

## Participation

Working science journalists typically discuss relevant issues with colleagues and others before preparing their reports. This class will be no different. I'll expect you to share your thoughts in class and on Sakai with your peers and with me. Classroom discussion will help clarify your ideas and sharpen your focus. You'll also be posting drafts of your written assignments on Sakai->Forums. On that site classmates will critique your work before you submit it for grading.

## Grading Rubric

As critical thinking and discussion with peers are integral to the work of journalists, classroom participation will count for 10 percent of your final grade. Your classroom participation grade will be based on the quality (not necessarily the quantity) of your discussion and will be based on the

following criteria:

- 1) Whether it's clear that you've read and thought about the readings.
- 2) Your ability to integrate ideas gleaned from the readings into the larger context of environmental and science reporting.
- 3) Each unexcused absence from the class will result in a 5-point deduction from your final participation grade. For classes on Zoom, you must have your camera on to be counted as present.

To sharpen your writing skills, you'll write three original stories. Each writing assignments will count for 30 percent of your final grade. Your grade for each story will be determined as follows (with 100 points possible for each assignment):

- 1) A maximum of 40 possible points for **reporting**. Key considerations in grading include the following:
  - a) Did you interview a variety of sources, each of whom was knowledgeable about the focus of your story and/or able to present a unique scientific or human interest perspective?
  - b) Did you consult primary sources (like journal articles or government publications, for example)?
  - c) Have you attributed information (other than common knowledge) to named and reliable sources?
  - d) At the end of your assignment, have you listed all personal sources consulted, including the source's name, phone number or email address?
- 2) A maximum of 40 possible points for **writing** quality. Consideration will be given to the following:
  - a) Did you write clearly?
  - b) Was your writing tight?
  - c) Did you follow writing guidelines enumerated by William Zinsser in his book, "On Writing Well"? If not, can you justify why not?
  - d) Does your story flow well?
  - e) Did you stick to your six-word message (as discussed in class)?
  - f) Did you follow style rules enumerated in the AP Stylebook?
- 3) A maximum of 20 possible points will be given for the following:
  - a) Is this story publishable with only minor edits?

Grading Scale (for undergraduates)

- 94 - 100 A
- 91 - 93 A-
- 88 - 90 B+
- 84 - 87 B
- 81 - 83 B-
- 78 - 80 C+

74 - 77 C  
71 - 73 C-  
68 - 70 D+  
64 - 67 D  
63 and below F

Grading Scale (for graduate students)

93 - 100 Honors  
74 - 92 Pass  
63 - 73 Low Pass  
63 and below F

After three unapproved class absences, each additional absence will result in a drop of one letter grade in the course. MEJO 560 is an upper division/graduate-level seminar, and your presence and contribution are essential. For information about what constitutes an approved absence, please refer to the University Approved Absence Office (<https://attendance.unc.edu/>) page.

## **Assignments**

To succeed in environmental and science journalism, you must write well. Good writing requires an understanding of the material and the ability to communicate ideas simply and clearly.

Drafts of all assignments must be posted on the Sakai->Forums site by deadlines listed in the syllabus. Submission of late assignments will result in a 10-point deduction per day. Misspelling of proper names will result in a 10-point deduction per misspelling. Misspelling of other words will result in a two-point deduction for each word misspelled. We'll follow the print style guidelines of the AP Stylebook (<http://www.apstylebook.com>). Each AP Stylebook error will result in a two-point deduction. If you intend to pursue journalism as a career, I strongly encourage you to purchase a copy of the AP Stylebook. As per the usual practice in the School of Journalism & Media, a major factual error will result in a failing grade for that particular assignment. Fabricating sources or quotations or engaging in plagiarism will constitute grounds for referral for an Honor Code violation. For more information about the UNC Honor Code, go to <http://instrument.unc.edu> (<http://instrument.unc.edu>).

## Additional Assignments for Graduate Students

All graduate students will have additional assignments beyond those required for undergraduate students in the class. That will include critiquing undergraduates' assignments submitted to

Sakai->Forums before students submit their completed work to Sakai->Assignments for a grade. Each grad student also will lead at least one classroom discussion during the semester.

## Equipment Checkout

For one assignment students may have an option of reporting in a medium (audio, video or information graphics) other than text. If you intend to check out equipment from the School's Park Library, please send me your name and PID so I can let the Park Library to know that you'll be seeking equipment to check out.

<https://equipmentroom.mj.unc.edu/> (<https://equipmentroom.mj.unc.edu/>)

To access the equipment room site from off-campus, you'll need to have the UNC VPN app installed on your computer. Follow the link below for a collection of instructional manuals for gear to be checked out from the Park Library:

<https://guides.lib.unc.edu/equipment-room/instruction-manuals> (<https://guides.lib.unc.edu/equipment-room/instruction-manuals>)

No grades will be released at the end of the semester unless equipment is returned to the Park Library before your final exam.

## How To Succeed in This Course

- Attend classes consistently.
- Complete readings before the appropriate classroom discussions.
- Participate actively in class discussions.
- Ask Dr. Linden questions either during class or during office hours if you're unclear about any aspect of the course.
- Turn in stories on time.
- Check the online syllabus frequently throughout the semester (preferably before each class) as assignments and topics may change without prior e-mail notice.

## WEEK 1:

JAN. 10: INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL AND SCIENCE JOURNALISM

\* Turn in Student Data Sheet that was emailed to you.

- \* Review syllabus.
- \* Discuss reading assignment below.

Reading for this class session:

Killian, Joe. "UNC's Gillings School of Public Health moves to online instruction for first three weeks of semester, (https://pulse.ncpolicywatch.org/2022/01/08/uncs-gillings-school-of-global-public-health-moves-to-online-instruction-for-first-three-weeks-of-semester/)" The Pulse, NC Policy Watch, Jan. 8, 2022.

Linden, Thomas, "Learning To Be a Medical Journalist (http://niemanreports.org/articles/learning-to-be-a-medical-journalist/)," Nieman Reports, Vol. 57, No. 2, Summer 2003, pp. 66-67 (in Sakai->Resources).

JAN. 12: A GUIDE TO WRITING NONFICTION

Reading for this class session:

Zinsser, William, On Writing Well, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 10, 11, 12.

**WEEK 2:**

JAN 17: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (NO CLASS)

JAN. 19: ETHICS OF ENVIRONMENTAL, SCIENCE AND MEDICAL JOURNALISM

Reading for this class session:

Association of Health Care Journalists, "Aiding Those in Distress (https://healthjournalism.org/secondarypage-details.php?id=898)."

Code of Ethics for Science Writers, www.nasw.org/code-ethics-science-writers.  
(https://www.nasw.org/code-ethics-science-writers)

Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, "A Reporter's Guide to Medical Privacy Law (http://www.rcfp.org/reporters-guide-medical-privacy-law)," Winter 2007 (pdf download).

SPJ (https://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp) Code of Ethics (https://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp).

Statement of Principles of the Association of Health Care Journalists (http://healthjournalism.org

[/secondarypage-details.php?id=56](#)).

"[Understanding HIPAA: A Brief Overview \(http://healthjournalism.org/resources-tips-details.php?id=12#.Vcomq0W2gso\)](http://healthjournalism.org/resources-tips-details.php?id=12#.Vcomq0W2gso)," Association of Health Care Journalists.

Zietman, Anthony L., "[Falsification, Fabrication, and Plagiarism: The Unholy Trinity of Scientific Writing \(http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360301613028137\)](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360301613028137)," International Journal of Radiation Oncology, Vol. 87, No. 2, 1 October 2013, pp. 225-227.

### Assignment

Assignment #1: 900-word science news story due Wednesday, Sept. 22. Please upload the **draft** of your story to Sakai->Forums->Assignment #1 (DRAFT) by **Monday, Feb. 7, at 6 p.m.**

### **WEEK 3:**

JAN. 24: HOW TO WRITE A SCIENCE NEWS STORY

#### Reading for this class session:

Linden, Tom. The New York Times Reader: Health & Medicine: Introduction and Chapter 1, 2, 3, pp. 1-50.

JAN. 26: HOW TO WRITE A SCIENCE NEWS STORY (cont.)

#### Reading for this class session:

Linden, Tom. The New York Times Reader: Health & Medicine, Chapters 7 and 8, pp. 120-182.

### Assignment

Work on draft of Assignment #1 due in Sakai->Forums->Assignment #1 (DRAFT) by 6 p.m., Monday, Feb. 7.

### **WEEK 4:**



## JAN. 31: INTERPRETATION OF SCIENCE STATISTICS

### Reading for this class session:

Cohn & Cope. News & Numbers: A Writer's Guide to Statistics, Part I, Learning the Basics, pp. 1-68 (available in Sakai->Course Reserves, click on "View Item" in left-hand column).

Russell, Cristine. "Risk Reporting," in Blum et al., editors, *A Field Guide for Science Writers*, Chapter 36, pp. 251-256.

Yong, Ed. "How the Pandemic Now Ends (<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2021/08/delta-has-changed-pandemic-endgame/619726/>)," *The Atlantic*, August 12, 2021.

### Assignment

Work on draft of Assignment #1 due in Sakai->Forums->Assignment #1 (DRAFT) by 6 p.m., Monday, Feb. 7.

## FEB. 2: UNDERSTANDING THE SCIENCE

### Reading for this class session:

Corum, Jonathan and Carl Zimmer. "Tracking Omicron and Other Coronavirus Variants, (<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/health/coronavirus-variant-tracker.html>)" *New York Times*, Jan. 5, 2022.

Wu, Katherine J. "COVID Isolation Is a Lot Like ... Muffin Baking (<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2022/01/covid-isolation-muffin-baking-cdc/621209/>)," *The Atlantic*, Jan. 6, 2022.

Wu, Katherine J. "How Long Does Omicron Take to Make You Sick? (<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2021/12/omicron-incubation-period-testing/621066/>)" *The Atlantic*, Dec. 20, 2021.

## **WEEK 5:**

### FEB. 7: UNDERSTANDING THE SCIENCE -- COVID'S ORIGINS

**Draft of Assignment #1 due in Sakai->Forums->Assignment #1 (DRAFT) by 6 p.m., tonight (Feb. 7).**

### Reading for this class session:

Rabin, Roni Caryn. "Caught in the Crossfire Over Covid's Origins (<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/24/health/coronavirus-origins-alina-chan.html>)," New York Times, August 24, 2021.

Quammen, David. "Why Weren't We Ready for the Coronavirus? (<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/05/11/why-werent-we-ready-for-the-coronavirus>)" The New Yorker, May 4, 2020.

Quammen, David. "Opinion: The Pandemic, From the Virus's Point of View, (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/19/opinion/sunday/coronavirus-covid-evolution.html>)" New York Times, Sept. 19, 2020.

### Assignment

Assignment #1: Please upload the FINAL copy of your 900-word story to Sakai->Assignments by **Monday, Feb. 14, at 6 p.m.**

FEB. 9: WRITING ABOUT SCIENCE AND THE ENVIRONMENT (cont.)

Reading for this class session:

Quammen, David. Spillover, Part 1 (pp. 13-49), Part 3 (pp. 125-164).

### **WEEK 6:**

FEB. 14: WRITING ABOUT SCIENCE AND THE ENVIRONMENT (cont.)

**Final version of Assignment #1 due in Sakai->Assignments by 6 p.m., tonight, Feb. 14 in Sakai->Assignments.**

Reading for this class session:

Quammen, David. Spillover, Part 8 (pp. 383-489).

FEB. 16: SCIENCE NEWS STORIES

Reading for this class session:

"Science Times" section from Tuesday, Feb. 8, New York Times. Please read **all** the stories in the print edition of the "Science Times" section. See the top of this syllabus for how to find the stories **online** that were featured in the **print** edition of the Tuesday, Feb. 8 issue of Science Times.

Blum et al., editors. A Field Guide for Science Writers, Part One: Learning the Craft, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 (all chapters found in Sakai->Course Reserves->click on "View Item" in left-hand column).

Linden, Tom. "The Role of Journalists in Reporting on Emerging Infectious Diseases," North Carolina Medical Journal, Vol. 77, No. 5, pp. 331-332. (download from Sakai->Resources).

Oransky, Ivan, "How Publish or Perish Promotes Inaccuracy in Science (<http://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/2015/12/sect1-1512.html>)--and Journalism (<http://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/2015/12/sect1-1512.html>)," AMA Journal of Ethics, December 2015, Vol. 17, Number 12: 1172-1175.

Browse Ivan Oransky's and Adam Marcus's Retraction Watch (<https://retractionwatch.com/>).

**WEEK 7:**

FEB. 21: CLASS CRITIQUE OF ASSIGNMENT #1

FEB. 23: WRITING ABOUT SCIENCE AND THE ENVIRONMENT (cont.)

Reading for this class session:

Blum et al., editors. A Field Guide for Science Writers (Second Edition) (<https://www.nasw.org/bookstore/field-guide-science-writers-official-guide-national-association-science-writers>), Part Five: Covering Stories in the Physical and Environmental Sciences (Chapters 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36). (All chapters found in Sakai ->Course Reserves).

**WEEK 8:**

## FEB. 28: WRITING ENVIRONMENTAL FICTION

### Reading for this class session:

Powers, Richard. *The Overstory*, pp. 1-111.

### Assignment:

Draft of Assignment #2 due in Sakai->Forums->Assignment #2 (DRAFT) by 6 p.m., Monday, March 7.

## MARCH 2: WRITING ENVIRONMENTAL FICTION (cont.)

### Reading for this class session:

Powers, Richard. *The Overstory*, pp. 112-217.

### Assignment:

Draft of Assignment #2 due in Sakai->Forums->Assignment #2 (DRAFT) by 6 p.m., Monday, March 7.

## WEEK 9:

## MARCH 7: WRITING SCIENCE ESSAYS

**Draft of Assignment #2 due in Sakai->Forums->Assignment #2 (DRAFT) by 6 p.m., tonight, March 7.**

### Reading for this class session:

Thomas, Lewis. *The Medusa and the Snail*, chapters entitled "The Medusa and the Snail," "The Wonderful Mistake," "To Err Is Human" and "On Cloning A Human Being" (all chapters found in Sakai -> Course Reserves>click on "View Item" in left-hand column).

### Assignment:

Critique classmates' assignments in your assigned Sakai->Forums group. Please post your critiques in Sakai->Forums before class resumes on Monday, March 21, after Spring Break.

## **SPRING BREAK (March 11 - March 20)**

### **WEEK 10:**

#### **MARCH 21: WRITING COMMENTARIES**

##### Reading for this class session:

Blum et al., editors. A Field Guide for Science Writers, Chapter 22 (found in Sakai -> Course Reserves >click on "View Item" in left-hand column).

Thorp, Holden H. "Editorial: Colleges need vaccine mandates, (<https://science.sciencemag.org/content/373/6553/369.full>)" Science, July 23, 2021.

Wen, Leana S. "Opinion: Omicron is bad. But we don't need to resort to lockdowns (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/01/03/omicron-lockdowns-covid-2022/?utm>)," Washington Post, Jan. 3, 2022.

##### Assignment:

Final version of Assignment #2 due in Sakai->Forums->Assignment #2 (FINAL) by 6 p.m., Monday, March 28.

#### **MARCH 23: WRITING COMMENTARIES (cont.)**

##### Reading for this class session:

Linden, New York Times Reader, Chapter 12, pp. 247-261.

Renkl, Margaret. "A Seed in Darkest Winter: The natural world is in convulsions. It's also poised to begin again (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/26/opinion/a-seed-in-darkest-winter.html>)," New York Times, Jan. 26, 2020.

### **WEEK 11:**

#### **MARCH 28: WRITING NARRATIVE STORIES**

**Final version of Assignment #2 due in Sakai->Assignments by 6 p.m., tonight, March 28.**

Reading for this class session:

Linden, New York Times Reader, Chapter 11, pp. 222-243.

Reading for **next** class session:

"Science Times" section from Tuesday, March 22, New York Times. Please read **all** the stories in the print edition of the "Science Times" section for the next class session. See the top of this syllabus for how to find the stories **online** that were featured in the **print** edition of the edition of Science Times on Tuesday, March 22.

MARCH 30: SCIENCE TIMES CRITIQUE & HISTORICAL STORIES

Reading for this class session:

Science Times section from Tuesday, March 22, New York Times. Please see the top of the syllabus for how to find the stories **online** that were featured in the print edition of the March 22 issue of the Science Times section in the New York Times.

Linden, New York Times Reader, Chapter 9, pp. 183-197.

McNeil Jr., Donald G., "[In Reaction to Zika Outbreak, Echoes of Polio](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/30/health/zika-outbreak-echoes-of-polio.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fscience&action=click&contentCollection=science&region=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=2&pgtype=sectionfront&_r=0) ([http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/30/health/zika-outbreak-echoes-of-polio.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fscience&action=click&contentCollection=science&region=stream&module=stream\\_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=2&pgtype=sectionfront&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/30/health/zika-outbreak-echoes-of-polio.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fscience&action=click&contentCollection=science&region=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=2&pgtype=sectionfront&_r=0))," New York Times, Aug. 29, 2016.

**WEEK 12:**

APRIL 4: WRITING SCIENCE ESSAYS

Reading for this class session:

Baird, Robert P., "[What Went Wrong With Coronavirus Testing in the U.S.](https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/what-went-wrong-with-coronavirus-testing-in-the-us?source=EDT_NYR_EDIT_NEWSLETTER_0_imagenewsletter_Daily_ZZ&utm_campaign=aud-dev&utm_source=nl&utm_brand=tny&utm_mailing=TNY_Daily_031720&utm_medium=email&bxid=5be9f51f2ddf9c72dc87210e&cndid=49603767&esrc=&mbid=&utm_term=TNY_Daily)" ([https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/what-went-wrong-with-coronavirus-testing-in-the-us?source=EDT\\_NYR\\_EDIT\\_NEWSLETTER\\_0\\_imagenewsletter\\_Daily\\_ZZ&utm\\_campaign=aud-dev&utm\\_source=nl&utm\\_brand=tny&utm\\_mailing=TNY\\_Daily\\_031720&utm\\_medium=email&bxid=5be9f51f2ddf9c72dc87210e&cndid=49603767&esrc=&mbid=&utm\\_term=TNY\\_Daily](https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/what-went-wrong-with-coronavirus-testing-in-the-us?source=EDT_NYR_EDIT_NEWSLETTER_0_imagenewsletter_Daily_ZZ&utm_campaign=aud-dev&utm_source=nl&utm_brand=tny&utm_mailing=TNY_Daily_031720&utm_medium=email&bxid=5be9f51f2ddf9c72dc87210e&cndid=49603767&esrc=&mbid=&utm_term=TNY_Daily))," The New Yorker, March 16, 2020.

Crosley, Sloane, "Essay: Someday, We'll Look Back on All of This and Write a Novel (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/books/review/sloane-crosley-pandemic-novel-coronavirus.html>)," New York Times, March 17, 2020.

Linden, Tom, New York Times Reader: Health and Medicine, Chapter 13, pp. 262-268 (Sakai->Resources).

Assignment:

Assignment #3 due in Sakai->Assignments, 6 p.m., Monday, April 18.

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/01/science/telling-the-story-of-the-brains-cacophony-of-competing-voices.html>)

APRIL 6: WRITING PERSPECTIVE & EXPLANATORY STORIES

Reading for this class session:

Johnson, George. "Explanatory Writing," Chapter 20, in Blum et al., editors. A Field Guide for Science Writers (available in Sakai->Course Reserves>click on "View Item" in left-hand column).

Harmon, Amy. "A Dying Young Woman's Hope in Cryonics and a Future (<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/13/us/cancer-immortality-cryogenics.html>)," New York Times, Sept. 12, 2015.

**WEEK 13:**

APRIL 11: REPORTING ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Reading for this class session:

McKibben, William. "The End of Nature (<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1989/09/11/the-end-of-nature>)," The New Yorker, September 3, 1989.

Mellen, Ruby and William Neff, "Beyond Human Endurance: How climate change is making parts of the world too hot and humid to survive ([https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2021/climate-change-humidity/?utm\\_campaign=wp\\_post\\_most&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&wpisrc=nl\\_most&carta-url=https%3A%2F](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2021/climate-change-humidity/?utm_campaign=wp_post_most&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&wpisrc=nl_most&carta-url=https%3A%2F))

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2021/07/28/washington-post-july-28-2021/>  
Washington Post, July 28, 2021.

Assignment:

Assignment #3 due in Sakai->Assignments, 6 p.m., Monday, April 18.

APRIL 13: WHAT THE FUTURE OF CLIMATE CHANGE MAY HOLD FOR THE PLANET

Reading for this class session:

Brannen, Peter. "[The Terrifying Warning Lurking in the Earth's Ancient Rock Record](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2021/03/extreme-climate-change-history/617793/),"  
(<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2021/03/extreme-climate-change-history/617793/>),"  
The Atlantic, March 2021.

**WEEK 14:**

APRIL 18: SCIENCE WRITING FOR MAGAZINES & THE WEB

**Assignment #3 due in Sakai->Assignments by 6 p.m., tonight, April 18.**

Reading for this class session: ([https://www.statnews.com/2018/03/20/news-deserts-infectious-disease/?utm\\_source=API+Need+to+Know+newsletter&utm\\_campaign=718e6f1978-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2018\\_03\\_21&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_e3bf78af04-718e6f1978-45843981](https://www.statnews.com/2018/03/20/news-deserts-infectious-disease/?utm_source=API+Need+to+Know+newsletter&utm_campaign=718e6f1978-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_03_21&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e3bf78af04-718e6f1978-45843981))

Blum et al., editors. A Field Guide for Science Writers, Chapters 9, 18, 19, 21 (all chapters found in Sakai->Course Reserves).

Branswell, Helen. "[When towns lose their newspapers, disease detectives are left flying blind](https://www.statnews.com/2018/03/20/news-deserts-infectious-disease/?utm_source=API+Need+to+Know+newsletter&utm_campaign=718e6f1978-)"  
([https://www.statnews.com/2018/03/20/news-deserts-infectious-disease/?utm\\_source=API+Need+to+Know+newsletter&utm\\_campaign=718e6f1978-](https://www.statnews.com/2018/03/20/news-deserts-infectious-disease/?utm_source=API+Need+to+Know+newsletter&utm_campaign=718e6f1978-)



[EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2018\\_03\\_21&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_e3bf78af04-718e6f1978-45843981](#))," STAT, March 20, 2018.

APRIL 20: Assignment #3 Class Critique

### **WEEK 15:**

APRIL 25: RADIO REPORTING -- Guest speaker, [Helen Chickering](https://www.bpr.org/people/helen-chickering) (<https://www.bpr.org/people/helen-chickering>), anchor/reporter/producer [Blue Ridge Public Radio](https://www.bpr.org) (<https://www.bpr.org>)

**--PLEASE MEET ON ZOOM, NO IN-CLASS SESSION TODAY**

Reading for this class session:

Linden, Tom, "Medical Reporting for the Electronic Media," in Barbara Gastel's Health Writer's Handbook (Second Edition), chapter in Sakai -> Resources->Linden Gastel book chapter.

Listening for this class session:

Chickering, Helen, "[Climate City: 12-11-10 Years To Avoid Catastrophe](https://www.bpr.org/post/climate-city-12-11-10-years-avoid-catastrophe#stream/0) (<https://www.bpr.org/post/climate-city-12-11-10-years-avoid-catastrophe#stream/0>)?" Blue Ridge Public Radio, Jan. 20, 2020.

Chickering, Helen, "[Green Coat & Small Plates Tackle WNC Hunger & Food Waste](https://www.bpr.org/post/green-coat-small-plates-tackle-wnc-hunger-food-waste#stream/0) (<https://www.bpr.org/post/green-coat-small-plates-tackle-wnc-hunger-food-waste#stream/0>)," Blue Ridge Public Radio, Nov. 12, 2019.

APRIL 27: FINAL CLASS OF THE SEMESTER  
Lessons learned and wrap-up

**FINAL EXAM DATE TBA**

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THE HONOR CODE (<http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2015/11/13/455677565/an-ill-newborn-a-loving-family-and-a-litany-of-wrenching-choices>)

I expect that each student will conduct himself or herself within the guidelines of the University honor system (<http://honor.unc.edu>). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this University demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor's responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Senior Associate Dean Charlie Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

### SEEKING HELP

If you need individual assistance, it's your responsibility to meet with the instructor. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in the course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem -- whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness. (<http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2015/11/13/455677565/an-ill-newborn-a-loving-family-and-a-litany-of-wrenching-choices>)

(<http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2015/11/13/455677565/an-ill-newborn-a-loving-family-and-a-litany-of-wrenching-choices>)

### PROFESSIONAL VALUES & COMPETENCIES (<http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>)

Among the many skills students will learn in this course, it's expected they will be able to fulfill the following values and competencies as enumerated by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication: (<http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>)

- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information; (<http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>)
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity; (<http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>)
- think critically, creatively and independently; (<http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>)
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work; (<http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>)
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve; (<http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>)
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness; (<http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>)
- apply basic numerical and statistical concepts; (<http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>)
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

(<http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>)

## SYLLABUS CHANGES

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.

## ARS

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs and activities.

Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: <https://ars.unc.edu> (<https://ars.unc.edu/>) or email [ars@unc.edu](mailto:ars@unc.edu) (<mailto:ars@unc.edu>). (source: <https://ars.unc.edu/faculty-staff/syllabus-statement> (<https://ars.unc.edu/faculty-staff/syllabus-statement>))

## COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> (<https://caps.unc.edu/>) or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

## TITLE IX

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/> (<https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>). Please contact the University's Title IX Coordinator (Elizabeth Hall, interim – [titleixcoordinator@unc.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@unc.edu) (<mailto:titleixcoordinator@unc.edu>)), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office ([reportandresponse@unc.edu](mailto:reportandresponse@unc.edu) (<mailto:reportandresponse@unc.edu>)), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators

([gvsc@unc.edu](mailto:gvsc@unc.edu) (<mailto:gvsc@unc.edu>); confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](https://safe.unc.edu/) (<https://safe.unc.edu/>).

## POLICY ON NON-DISCRIMINATION

The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals' abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle and applicable laws, the University's Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination (<https://unc.policystat.com/policy/4467906/latest/>) offers access to its educational programs and activities as well as employment terms and conditions without respect to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, genetic information, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied.

If you are experiencing harassment or discrimination, you can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (see contact info at [safe.unc.edu](https://safe.unc.edu/) (<https://safe.unc.edu/>)) or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (<http://eoc.unc.edu/>), or online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/> (<https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>).

## DIVERSITY STATEMENT

I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve; I appreciate any suggestions. More broadly, our school has adopted diversity and inclusion mission and vision statements (<http://hussman.unc.edu/diversity-and-inclusion>) with accompanying goals. These complement the University policy on prohibiting harassment and discrimination (<https://eoc.unc.edu/our-policies/ppdhrm/>). In summary, UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. The Dean of Students (Suite 1106, Student Academic Services Building, CB# 5100, 450 Ridge Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-5100 or [919] [966-4042](tel:966-4042) (<tel:966-4042>)) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the University's nondiscrimination policies.

## MASK USE

All enrolled students are required to wear a mask covering your mouth and nose at all times in our classroom. This requirement is to protect our educational community -- your classmates and me -- as we learn together. If you choose not to wear a mask, or wear it improperly, I will ask you to leave immediately, and I will submit a report to the Office of Student Conduct ([https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UNCCChapelHill&layout\\_id=23](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UNCCChapelHill&layout_id=23)). At that point you will be disenrolled from this course for the protection of our educational community. Students who have an authorized accommodation from Accessibility Resources and Service have an exception. For additional information, see <https://carolinatogether.unc.edu/university-guidelines-for-facemasks/> (<https://carolinatogether.unc.edu/university-guidelines-for-facemasks/>).

-- syllabus revised Jan. 9, 2022

(<http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>).