

Environmental and Science Journalism

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Hussman School of Journalism and Media

MEJO 560, Spring 2023

MW 2:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m., Carroll Hall, Room 60

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Course Description & Goals

This is a seminar-style course in which you'll be expected to actively participate in discussions about class reading assignments. Through the diverse reading, you'll gain an appreciation of the breadth and depth of environmental and science journalism. Beyond the reading assignments that form the scaffolding of the course, you'll also learn the basics of reporting on environmental and science news for a variety of media, principally print or text, but also to a lesser degree audio and video. 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

The Covid pandemic continues even though many masking and vaccination requirements have been relaxed. As of the first week of class, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports more than 470,000 weekly cases with more than 2,700 weekly deaths and more than 6,500 daily hospital admissions. For immuno-compromised and elderly people, Covid still represents a serious threat. Accordingly, 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.

Reading

Reading for the course include a classic book on writing well, a primer about science writing from masters in the field, a text on writing medical and health stories, a book from a leading environmental journalist about the origins of the Covid pandemic, a Pulitzer Prize-winning book on human-caused animal extinctions, and a novel about forests 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 Stores 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) Kolbert, Elizabeth. The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History (<https://www.amazon.com/Sixth-Extinction-Unnatural-History/dp/1250062187>), Picador (paperback), © 2014, 319 pp., ISBN: 978-1250062185, \$13.39.

3) 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)

4) Powers, Richard. The Overstory, (https://www.wob.com/en-us/books/richard-powers/overstory/9781784708245?gclid=Cj0KCQiAzeSdBhC4ARIsACj36uHpYtnrQpn4_LjAr265THBN7bs7aqwSp0_V) Simon & Schuster, (paperback) © 2022, 625 pp., ISBN: 978-1784708245, \$8.99.

5) Quammen, David. Breathless: The Scientific Race To Defeat A Deadly Virus (https://www.amazon.com/Breathless/dp/184792669X/ref=asc_df_184792669X/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=632155282044&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=1912283338200976967&hvpon=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9009670&hvtargid=pla-1748513378785&psc=1), Simon & Schuster, © 2022, 486 pp., ISBN:978-1847926692, \$20.83.

6) 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, for two class sessions we'll discuss articles from the Tuesday Science Times section of the New York Times. To view stories under discussion in class, go to 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

The screenshot shows the front page of The New York Times website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the newspaper's name, date (Tuesday, July 27, 2021), and weather (90°F). Below the navigation bar is a main headline: "In Reversal, C.D.C. to Recommend Some Vaccinated People Wear Masks Indoors". To the right of the headline is a map of the United States titled "Hospitalizations Rise in Areas With Outbreaks". Below the map is a table comparing COVID-19 statistics for the United States and the World. To the right of the table are two bar charts: "U.S. vaccinations" and "Global vaccinations". At the bottom of the page, there is a "Sign up for updates" button and a list of links for various topics.

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.

Hospitalizations Rise in Areas With Outbreaks
Hospitalized Covid-19 patients per 100,000 people

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	14-day change	World	14-day change
New cases	56,635	+144%	542,058	+21%
New deaths	275	+7%	10,038	+24%

U.S. vaccinations

	At least one dose	Fully vaccinated
Total pop.	57%	49%
18 and up	69%	60%

Global vaccinations

[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 20 percent of your final grade. Your classroom participation grade will be based on the quality (not necessarily the quantity) of your discussion and 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.

To sharpen your writing skills, you'll produce three original stories. The first two writing assignments will each count for 25 percent of your final grade. Your third assignment 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 and/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?
 - b) Will your story require a major rewrite to be publishable?

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 High Pass

74 - 92 Pass

63 - 73 Low Pass

63 and below F

After four 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

Graduate students will have additional assignments beyond those required for undergraduate students in the class.

Equipment Checkout

For the final assignment students will have the 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.

Special Notice: This syllabus may change at any time. As major events develop in environmental and science arenas, assignments, assignment due dates and readings may change. Check the syllabus after each class to prepare for readings and/or assignments for the next class.

WEEK 1:

JAN. 9: 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

Linden, Thomas, "[Learning To Be a Medical Journalist \(http://niemanreports.org/articles/learning-to-be-a-medical-journalist/\)](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. 11: 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 16: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (NO CLASS)

JAN. 18: 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>)," 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>)," International Journal of Radiation Oncology, Vol. 87, No. 2, 1 October 2013, pp. 225-227.

Assignment

Assignment #1: 750-word science news story due Monday, Feb. 13. Please upload the **draft** of your story to Sakai->Forums->Assignment #1 (DRAFT) by **Monday, Feb. 6, at 6 p.m.**

WEEK 3:

JAN. 23: 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. 25: HOW TO WRITE A SCIENCE NEWS STORY (cont.) --

Reading for this class session

Linden, Tom. The New York Times Reader: Health & Medicine, Chapter 8, pp. 156 - 182.

Assignment

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

WEEK 4:

JAN. 30: 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. 6.

FEB. 1: THE ORIGINS & EVOLUTION OF COVID --

Reading for this class session

Quammen, David. "Breathless," Chapters I through V.

Assignment

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

WEEK 5:

FEB. 6: THE ORIGINS & EVOLUTION OF COVID (cont.) --

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

Reading for this class session

Quammen, David. "Breathless," Chapters VI through VIII.

Assignment

Assignment #1: Please upload the FINAL copy of your 900-word story to Sakai->Assignments by **Wednesday, Feb. 15, at 6 p.m.**

FEB. 8: EXPLANATORY STORIES --

Reading for this class session

Kaplan, Sarah. "With forests in peril, she's on a mission to save 'mother trees (https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-solutions/interactive/2022/suzanne-simard-mother-trees-climate/?itid=mr_climate%20solutions_1)," Washington Post, Dec. 27, 2022.

Linden, Tom. The New York Times Reader: Health & Medicine, Chapter 7, pp. 120 - 155.

Assignment

Final version of Assignment #1 due in Sakai->Assignments by 6 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 15, in Sakai->Assignments.

WEEK 6:

FEB. 13: WELL-BEING DAY (No Class)

FEB. 15: SCIENCE NEWS STORIES --

Final version of Assignment #1 due in Sakai->Assignments by 6 p.m., tonight, Wednesday, Feb. 15 in Sakai->Assignments

Reading for this class session

"Science Times" section from Tuesday, Feb. 7, New York Times. For easy reference, here are the stories and columns.

Feature stories from "Science Times" (TBA)

Branded columns from the "Well section of "Science Times" (TBA)

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).

WEEK 7:

FEB. 20: CLASS CRITIQUE OF ASSIGNMENT #1

Reading for this class session

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).

Assignment

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

FEB. 22: 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) (<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). (All chapters found in Sakai ->Course Reserves).

WEEK 8:

FEB. 27: WRITING ENVIRONMENTAL NARRATIVES

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.

Assignment:

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

MARCH 1: WRITING ENVIRONMENTAL ESSAYS

Reading for this class session

Renkl, Margaret. "[How to Talk about 'Extreme Weather' With Your Angry Uncle](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/25/opinion/climate-change-conservatives.html?searchResultPosition=18)" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/25/opinion/climate-change-conservatives.html?searchResultPosition=18>)," New York Times, July 25, 2022.

Renkl, Margaret, "[Falling a Little Bit in Love With the Dark](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/19/opinion/winter-solstice-dark-light.html?searchResultPosition=1)," (<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/19/opinion/winter-solstice-dark-light.html?searchResultPosition=1>)" New York Times, Dec. 21, 2022.

Renkl, Margaret, "[One Way to Do More for the Environment: Do Less With Your Yard](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/16/opinion/climate-change-gardening-biodiversity.html?searchResultPosition=26)" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/16/opinion/climate-change-gardening-biodiversity.html?searchResultPosition=26>)," New York Times, May 16, 2022.

Renkl, Margaret. "[Why We Should All Be Chasing Acorns](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10)" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10>)

[/17/opinion/oak-trees-conservation-ecosystems.html?searchResultPosition=8](#))," New York Times, Oct. 17, 2022.

Assignment

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

WEEK 9:

MARCH 6: WRITING SCIENCE ESSAYS --

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

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.

MARCH 8 WRITING SCIENCE ESSAYS (cont.) --

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&cnid=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).

SPRING BREAK (March 11 - March 19)

WEEK 10:

MARCH 20: WRITING COMMENTARIES --

Reading for this class session

Barry, Dan. "Essay: Alone With a Basketball, a Hoop and Covid (<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/17/sports/dan-barry-basketball-covid.html>)," The New York Times, Jan. 17, 2022.

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).

Assignment

Final version of Assignment #2 due in Sakai->Forums->Assignment #2 (FINAL) by 6 p.m., Monday, March 27.

MARCH 22: WRITING NARRATIVE FICTION --

Reading for this class session

Powers, Richard. The Overstory, through the first four profiles with the last chapter being Ray Brinkman and Dorothy Cazaly. (approximately 90 pages -- varies by the print edition)

WEEK 11:

MARCH 27: WRITING NARRATIVE FICTION (cont.) --

Reading for this class session

Powers, Richard. The Overstory, through the last four profiles with the last chapter being Olivia Vandergriff (approximately 90 pages -- varies by the print edition)

Final version of Assignment #2 due in Sakai->Assignments by 6 p.m., tonight, March 27.

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 21, 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 21.

MARCH 29: SCIENCE TIMES CRITIQUE & HISTORICAL STORIES --

Reading for this class session

Science Times section from Tuesday, March 21, 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®ion=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®ion=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=2&pgtype=sectionfront&_r=0)," New York Times, Aug. 29, 2016.

WEEK 12:

APRIL 3: PROFILES

Buckley, Cara, "[Using Science and Celtic Wisdom to Save Trees \(and Souls\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/climate/celtic-wisdom-trees-climate.html)" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/climate/celtic-wisdom-trees-climate.html>)," New York Times, Feb. 24, 2022.

Diamond, Jonny, "The Old Man and the Tree (<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/the-old-man-and-the-tree-180979242/>)," Smithsonian Magazine, January 2022.

Assignment

Assignment #3 due in Sakai->Assignments, 6 p.m., Monday, April 17.

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

APRIL 5: 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) (<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/13/us/cancer-immortality-cryogenics.html>)," New York Times, Sept. 12, 2015.

WEEK 13:

APRIL 10: WRITING ABOUT SPECIES EXTINCTIONS

Reading for this class session

Kolbert, Elizabeth. "The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History," Chapters I through V, pp. 1 - 110.

Assignment

Assignment #3 due in Sakai->Assignments, 6 p.m., Monday, April 17.

APRIL 12: WRITING ABOUT SPECIES EXTINCTIONS

Reading for this class session

Kolbert, Elizabeth. "The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History," Chapters VI through X, pp. 111 - 216.

Assignment

Assignment #3 due in Sakai->Assignments, 6 p.m., Monday, April 17.

WEEK 14:

APRIL 17: 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.

Assignment #3 due in Sakai->Assignments by 6 p.m., tonight, April 17.

APRIL 19: SPECTRUM OF SCIENCE WRITING

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)

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

WEEK 15:

APRIL 24: RADIO REPORTING -- Guest speaker, Helen Chickering (<https://www.bpr.org/people/helen-chickering>), anchor/reporter/producer Blue Ridge Public Radio (<https://www.bpr.org>) (unconfirmed)

-- PLEASE MEET ON ZOOM (URL TBA), 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, "Thanksgiving, Climate Change & Hurricanes (<https://www.bpr.org/news/2019-11-26/thanksgiving-climate-change-hurricanes>)," Blue Ridge Public Radio, Nov. 26, 2019.

Chickering, Helen, "Biologist Moves To WNC To Study Jellyfish, (<https://www.bpr.org/news/2018-12-20/biologist-moves-to-wnc-to-study-jellyfish>)" Blue Ridge Public Radio, Dec. 20, 2018.

APRIL 26: FINAL CLASS OF THE SEMESTER

Lessons learned and wrap-up

FINAL EXAM DATE: Friday, May 5, 4 p.m.

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>). (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>)), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (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>); confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at 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/) (<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/>)) or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](http://eoc.unc.edu/) (<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)) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the University's nondiscrimination policies.

-- syllabus revised January 8, 2023

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