

Introduction to Science Communication

Course Syllabus

Fall 2019 – 1 credit

GEO 542 (CRN# 74875): Food-Energy-Water Seminar

Fridays 9:00-9:50 (CHCB 333)

+ AGU Sci Comm workshop + field trips

Instructor

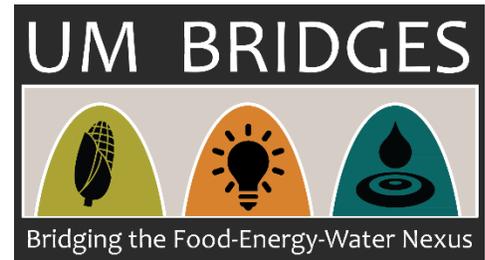
Andrew Wilcox

Department of Geosciences

Clapp Building (CHCB) #357

andrew.wilcox@umontana.edu

Office Hours by appointment



Course Description

This course is offered through the UM BRIDGES training program, which trains future leaders to advance societally relevant science toward more sustainable food-energy-water systems (umt.edu/bridges). This seminar is designed to introduce you to core concepts in Science Communication and provide grounding of those concepts through exploration of issues at the nexus of food-energy-water systems (FEWS), whereby you will also have opportunities to communicate about nexus issues using different platforms.

This course will be followed by a second seminar in your second year, where you will refine and apply science-communication skills in the context of your own research.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes

1. Understand why science communication is important and learn the basics of good science communication;
2. Apply science-communication skills through brief reports on FEWS nexus issues using multiple platforms.

Course Assessment

Course grading is credit/no-credit. To gain credit, you must attend all sessions and field trips and complete assignments. You may miss one Friday morning session with prior approval; under this scenario, you should meet with the instructor to develop an alternative plan for obtaining the content you missed. Attendance at the entire AGU Sharing Science workshop is mandatory. If you will not be able to make all of the workshop, I encourage you to instead take this class next year. There will also be occasional readings and other small assignments, posted on Moodle and/or announced in class.

Course Logistics and Schedule

This seminar meets at the following times:

Friday August 30, 9-9:50am – The what and why of science communications

Wednesday September 11, 12-1:30 (optional): meeting with Pete McBride (Lecture at the Nexus speaker) to discuss science communication

Friday September 20, 2 – 6 pm: AGU Sharing Science Workshop

Saturday September 21, 8 – 12 am: AGU Sharing Science Workshop

Friday October 4, 2-5 pm - Field trip 1: assignment*

Friday October 18, 9-9:50 am – Communication with journalists (Nadia White, School of Journalism)

November 1, 2-5 pm - Field trip 2: assignment*

Friday November 15, 9-9:50 am

Friday November 22, 9-9:50 am (Final class meeting)

***Assignments** will be posted on Moodle 1 week prior to the field trip and will be due within one week following the field trip.

Communication platforms

We will use a web blog as a primary vehicle for showcasing our communication in this class (<https://bridgeswefnexus.wordpress.com/>). We will use a blog because it is a simple solution to shared communication, and blogs by definition are designed to get people engaged/interested in what you are discussing via interesting text and images. Blogs as a vehicle for communication are only as good as the audience you have to read them. Thus, we will use Twitter (e.g., @WEFNexusUM) as an important tool in building an audience and directing them to the blog. We will also use Twitter as a means of teaching us to write pithy, engaging statements. You'll get a chance to find out if social media is something you love or hate – and part of your assessment will be based on not only your blog posts, but the tweets you use to support them. We will also emphasize peer evaluation in this course, using the UM BRIDGES Science Communication Evaluation Rubric posted on Moodle.

Respect, Inclusiveness and Diversity of Thoughts, Ideas and People

All students are entitled to and deserve respect, courtesy and tolerance, regardless of their race, ethnicity, background, religious affiliation, gender, sexual preference, disability or any other perceived difference. Likewise, faculty, staff, guest speakers, community members, and fellow students deserve the same treatment from other students. I will make every effort to promote and create a safe space for diverse thoughts, regardless of the form of communication. I ask that you do the same. We will strive towards an engaging, respectful and open forum in which numerous opinions related to the course material can be discussed and explored.

Equal Access

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors and [Disability Services for Students](#) (DSS). If you have a disability that adversely affects your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or by calling 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

Student Conduct

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the [Student Conduct Code](#), which describes expected standards of student behavior, including academic conduct and general conduct, and outlines students' rights, responsibilities, and the campus processes for adjudicating alleged violations.

Course Withdrawal Deadlines

Important Dates Restricting Opportunities to Drop a Course are listed at <https://www.umt.edu/registrar/calendar.php>. In general, you may drop any course up to the 15th instructional day and receive a refund. Beginning the 16th instructional day, a class drop form, with the instructor's signature is required. You will also need to pay a \$10 fee, will not receive a refund, and you will receive a "W" on your transcript. On the 46th day of instruction and thereafter, students may only drop a class under very limited and unusual circumstances. Not doing well in the class, deciding you are concerned about how the class grade might affect your GPA, deciding you did not want to take the class after all, and similar reasons are not among those limited and unusual circumstances. If you want to drop the class for these sorts of reasons, make sure you do so by the end of the 45th instructional day of the semester. On the 46th day of instruction and thereafter, requests to drop must be signed by the instructor, advisor, and Associate Dean (in that order) so if you pursue this request, leave sufficient time to schedule meetings with each of these individuals (generally this will take at least 3-5 working days). A \$10 fee applies if approved. Instructor must indicate whether the individual is Passing or Failing the class at the time of request.