

**Winter 2013**  
**Environment 150**  
**Environmental Journalism, Science Communications, and New Media**  
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2:00-3:15pm — La Kretz 120

**Instructor:** Jon Christensen, Adjunct Assistant Professor & Pritzker Fellow  
Institute of the Environment and Sustainability & Department of History  
[jonchristensen@ioes.ucla.edu](mailto:jonchristensen@ioes.ucla.edu)

**Office hours:** Thursdays, 10 AM – noon, and by appointment, Life Sciences 4356.

**Course description:**

Introduction to environmental journalism, science communications, and new media, including weekly guest lectures by prominent, successful practitioners in a wide variety of media. Focus on technologies, methods, genres, and theories of communicating environmental challenges, exploring solutions, and engaging the public in newspapers, television, radio, movies, online, on mobile devices, and through social media. Discussion of the possibilities and limitations of different media and the importance of communications for environmental science, policy, public understanding, and individual decision-making. Students will produce environmental communications in a variety of media.

**Course materials and readings:**

Course materials will consist of lecture notes and readings based on selected published papers and excerpts from books as well as regular reading and viewing of articles and productions in popular media, which will all be available electronically through the course website.

There is one required book: *Escape from the Ivory Tower: A Guide to Making Your Science Matter*, by Nancy Baron, foreword by Donald Kennedy. Island Press, Washington, D.C.: 2010.

Students must complete the readings listed as due for each day on this syllabus and the course web site in order to be prepared for that class session.

**Assignments and grading:**

P/NP or letter grading. Grading will be based on:

Homework assignments: 30 points, with 5 points for each assignment, made up of 1 point for each of the following categories: clarity and substance, accuracy and attribution, style that matches and enhances the production, originality and creativity, and advancing our collective conversation.

Midterm media production: 30 points, with 5 points for a persuasive pitch, and in the final product 5 points for each of the following categories: clarity and substance, accuracy and attribution, style that matches and enhances the production, and originality and creativity.

Final media production: 30 points, with 5 points for a persuasive pitch, and in the final product 5 points for each of the following categories: clarity and substance, accuracy and attribution, style that matches and enhances the production, and originality and creativity.

Class participation: 10 points, 2 points for each very good question or comment during discussions with guests.

Attendance: After two unexcused absences, students will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade for each additional two unexcused absences. An excused absence must be approved in advance unless it is for a medical or personal emergency.

Extra credit opportunities: to be announced.

Assignments are due on the date listed. Late submissions will be penalized 10 percent for each day late.

### **Course schedule:**

#### **Tuesday, January 8**

Lecture and discussion: Introduction and course overview.

#### **Thursday, January 10**

Guests: Nancy Baron, Compass; Ken Weiss, Los Angeles Times.

Reading due: *Escape from the Ivory Tower*, xi-62, and 103-121.

Homework assignment #1 due: Profile of a fellow student on the class discussion forum.

#### **Tuesday, January 15**

Guests: Michael Osborne, Miles Traer, and Leslie Chang, Generation Anthropocene.

Homework assignment #2 due: Discussion forum post about Nancy Baron, Ken Weiss, and science communications.

#### **Thursday, January 17**

Guest: Keith Kloor, Discover Magazine.

Reading due: *Escape from the Ivory Tower*, 63-100.

Midterm preparation assignment due: Pitch for midterm media production.

#### **Tuesday, January 22**

Guest: Lauren Sommer, KQED "Quest."

Reading due: *Escape from the Ivory Tower*, 123-152.

#### **Thursday, January 24**

Guest: Felicity Barringer, The New York Times.

Reading due: *Escape from the Ivory Tower*, 153-196.

**Tuesday, January 29**

Lecture and discussion: Writing and producing in different media: print, audio, video.  
Homework assignment #3 due: Discussion forum post, podcast, or video on environmental communications in the Anthropocene.

**Thursday, January 31**

Guest: Richard Jackson, Designing Healthy Communities, UCLA.  
Reading due: *Escape from the Ivory Tower*, 197-232.

**Tuesday, February 5**

Lecture and discussion: Writing and producing for magazines, books, and e-books.

**Thursday, February 7**

Guests: Alexis Madrigal, *The Atlantic*; Sarah Rich, *Smithsonian*.  
Midterm due: Midterm media production due.

**Tuesday, February 12**

Guest: Peter Kareiva, The Nature Conservancy

**Wednesday, February 13**

Extra credit public lecture: Peter Kareiva, The Nature Conservancy, 6 PM, “Conservation for Our World of Nine Billion People: The End of Nostalgia and Apocaholism.”  
Note: You must subscribe to the UCLA IoES events list and RSVP for this event by emailing [events@ioes.ucla.edu](mailto:events@ioes.ucla.edu).

**Thursday, February 14**

Lecture and discussion: Review of midterm media productions and midterm grade progress reports.

**Tuesday, February 19**

Lecture and discussion: Grand challenges in media and the environment.  
Homework assignment #4 due: Discussion forum post reviewing Peter Kareiva.

**Thursday, February 21**

Guest: Andy Revkin, “DotEarth,” *The New York Times*.  
Final preparation assignment due: Pitch for final media production.

**Tuesday, February 26**

Guest: Tim De Chant, PBS NOVA.

**Thursday, February 28**

No class. Review of final media production pitch.  
Homework assignment #5 due: Discussion forum post, podcast, or video about grand challenges.

**Tuesday, March 5**

Lecture and discussion: Creating a social media campaign.

**Thursday, March 7**

Guest: Jamie Henn, 350.org

Homework assignment #6 due: Discussion forum post making a proposal for a social media campaign.

**Tuesday, March 12**

Guest: Sandy Close, New America Media.

**Thursday, March 14**

Lecture and discussion: Final media production presentations.

Final due: Final media production.