



ENVS*2230 - Communications in Environmental Science

Fall 2026 Course Outline

Section: 01

Credits: 0.50

Land Acknowledgement: Guelph

The University of Guelph resides on the ancestral lands of the Attawandaron people and the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. We recognize the significance of the Dish with One Spoon Covenant to this land and offer respect to our Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Métis neighbours. Today, this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and acknowledging them reminds us of our important connection to this land where we work and learn.

Calendar Description

This course provides students with direct training in the academic skills used in researching and communicating environmental science. Within the context of current problems in environmental science, students will develop skills in library research, statistical interpretation, oral and poster presentation and written communication to diverse audiences. Students will research and report on scientific issues within environmental issues being reported in the media.

Prerequisite(s): 1 of ENVM*1000, ENVM*1200, ENVS*1030

Restriction(s): Registration in BBRM, BSC(Env) or BSC(Agr) programs.

Department(s): School of Environmental Sciences

Lecture Schedule

Mon 4:30pm-5:20pm in MCKN*225 (9/10 to 12/22)

Wed 8:30am-11:20am in MCKN*229 (Seminar)

Instructor Information

Simone (she/her) Haerri

Email: shaerri@uoguelph.ca

Communicating With Your Instructor

Office hours via appointment only. But I am very open to answer questions before and after class. The seminars are designed in a way that you can ask me a lot of questions.

E-mail is the best way to get in touch with me. I generally answer E-mails once a day. So expect a response within 24 - 48 hours. If your E-mail is time-sensitive, then I will answer as quickly as possible.

Learning Resources

Required Resources

CourseLink

The instructor uses CourseLink (<https://courselink.uoguelph.ca/>) for posting class announcements, lecture slides, in-class quizzes, grades and other required and recommended materials that is relevant to this course. Please check CourseLink at least once a day.

If you need any assistance with the software tools or the CourseLink website, contact CourseLink Support.

Email: courselink@uoguelph.ca

Tel: 519-824-4120 ext. 56939



Toll-Free (CAN/USA): 1-866-275-1478

Campus Resources

If you are concerned about any aspect of your academic program: Make an appointment with an Academic Advisor (<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/enrolment-records/academic-advisors/>) in your degree program. If you are struggling to succeed academically: There are numerous academic resources offered by the U of G Library (<https://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/using-library/guide-undergraduate-students/>) including, Supported Learning Groups for a variety of courses, workshops related to time management, taking multiple choice exams, and general study skills.

Cost of Textbooks and Learning Resources

Textbook / Learning Resource	Required / Recommended	Cost
N/A	N/A	No cost

Students are advised that prices are often determined by the publisher or bookstore and may be subject to change.

Course Level Learning Outcomes

1. Proficiently utilize literature search tools to find relevant primary and secondary scientific articles, distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources, and create an annotated bibliography.
2. Summarize and translate scientific findings into professional oral presentations, scientific posters, structured oral debates and written debate briefs.
3. Deliver engaging scientific presentations and posters by integrating best practices in public speaking, storytelling, and visual design.
4. Develop and defend evidence-based scientific arguments through structured debates, demonstrating the ability to critically evaluate information, articulate clear positions, and respond effectively to counterarguments.
5. Translate complex environmental issues and communicate them clearly and engagingly to lay and public audiences using key principles of science communication across a variety of media formats, including press releases, news articles and op-eds.

Teaching and Learning Activities

The schedule for seminars and lectures may be adjusted as needed. Please watch for announcements regarding changes.

Seminar Activities

Week 1 - Different communication types and common communication challenges
Week 2 - Practice finding relevant and trustworthy articles - find article for your presentation
Week 3 - Critically analyse articles - Extract key points from your article
Week 4 - How to improve your presentation skills - Create outline for your presentation
Week 5 - *Cohort 1*: Give scientific presentation. *Cohort 3*: Gather info from presentations for press release.
Week 6 - *Cohort 2*: Give scientific presentation. *Cohort 1*: Gather info from presentations for press release
Week 7 - *Cohort 3*: Give scientific presentation. *Cohort 2*: Gather info from presentations for press release
Week 8 - How to create strong posters and how to successfully visualize relevant aspects - outline and visualize your article
Week 9 - Student poster presentations (with students not presenting poster gathering information for news article)
Week 10 - Student poster presentations (with students not presenting poster gathering information for news article)
Week 11 - Debates (with students not debating gathering information for op-ed)
Week 12 - Debates (with students not debating gathering information for op-ed)

Lecture Schedule

Week 1 - Welcome and class overview
Week 2 - How to identify resources as reliable and trustworthy
Week 3 - How to read scientific articles
Week 4 - Press releases
Week 5 - Fall study break
Week 6 - Science communication principles I
Week 7 - Science communication principles II
Week 8 - News articles
Week 9 - Debate overview and stakeholders
Week 10 - Arguments, evidence and debate briefs
Week 11 - Op-ed's
Week 12 - Science communication showcase



Assignment deadlines

Due to the nature of the course design, students will have different deadlines for most of the assignments.

Assessment Breakdown

Description	Weighting (%)	Due Date
Scientific oral presentation	17.5%	Cohort Dependent (Tuesday of Week 5, 6 or 7)
Press release	5%	Cohort Dependent (Sunday of Week 5, 6 or 7)
Scientific poster	17.5%	Cohort Dependent (Tuesday of Week 9 or 10)
News article	7.5%	Cohort Dependent (Sunday of Week 9 or 10)
Debate brief (group)	7.5%	Group Dependent (Tuesday of Week 11 or 12)
Oral debates (group)	12.5%	Group Dependent (Seminar of Week 11 or 12)
Op-ed	10%	Group Dependent (Sunday of Week 11 or Friday of Week 12)
Mixed media science communication	17.5%	Friday of Week 8
Exit tickets	5%	End of seminar and lecture

Grading Schemes

During the first week of exams (after you received all your grades), you can request to switch **5% of the weight** of one of your assignment to another assignment. You cannot choose an assignment that you did not complete.

To have your request considered, you must also submit a short **reflection (150–200 words, about ½ page double-spaced)** on the assignment you are reducing the weight from. Your reflection should:

- Summarize the key skills or concepts you practiced in the assignment.
- Explain what you learned or how the experience contributed to your development, even if your grade was not as high as you hoped.

Only requests accompanied by a thoughtful reflection will be accepted.

Scientific Presentation and Scientific poster

The presentations take place during the seminar the day after your submission deadline.

Last Day to Drop Course

The final day to drop Fall 2026 courses without academic penalty is the last day of classes: December 04

After this date, a mark will be recorded, whether course work is completed or not (a zero is assigned for missed tests/assignments). This mark will show on the student's transcript and will be calculated into their average.

Course Grading Policies

Submission of Assignments

Assignments are to be submitted online via D2L before midnight on the due date. When submitting your assignments using the Dropbox tool, do not leave the page until your assignment has successfully uploaded. To verify that your submission was complete, you can view the submission history immediately after the upload to see which files uploaded successfully. The system will also email you a receipt. Save this email receipt as proof of submission.

Be sure to keep a back-up copy of all of your assignments in the event that they are lost in transition. In order to avoid any last-minute computer problems, your instructor strongly recommends you save your assignments to a cloud-based file storage (e.g., OneDrive), or send to your email account, so that should something happen to your computer, the assignment could still be submitted on time or re-submitted.

Late Assignment

Assignments handed-in late, for which an extension has not been granted ahead of time, will lose 5% of the total marks for every day (or part thereof) that it is late (i.e an 80 will become a 75 if your submission is late by one day). If you require an extension on an assignment, you must have a valid



reason and contact Dr. Ha#rri **in advance of the due date**. Extensions will be considered for medical reasons or other extenuating circumstances. If you require an extension, discuss this with the instructor as soon as possible and well before the due date.

Course Standard Statements

Course Policies

Group work

All assignments - except for the debate briefs and oral debates - should be written entirely by the student alone, should reflect the opinion of the student alone and should be the original work of the student. For group assignments, the completed assignment should contain only work which has been produced by members of the group in question.

For the **debate briefs**, there will be a peer assessment of group work. Your final grade may be adjusted downward if peer and self-assessments indicate that your contribution was less than that of your group members. The adjustment will reflect the percentage difference in contribution as reported by the group. For the **oral debate**, the group will receive a shared grade. Individual grades may be adjusted to recognize the quality of each member's oral contributions, including clarity, confidence, and persuasiveness.

Turnitin

In this course, your instructor will be using Turnitin, integrated with the CourseLink Dropbox tool, to detect possible plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration or copying as part of the ongoing efforts to maintain academic integrity at the University of Guelph.

All submitted assignments will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.

All assignments will be screened, but you will only have access to your Turnitin score if you contact the instructor at least two days before the due date.

Use of AI Tools

Please read the University of Guelph's statement on the use of AI (<https://news.uoguelph.ca/2023/03/university-of-guelph-statement-on-artificial-intelligence-systems-chatgpt-academic-integrity/>), including ChatGPT and similar tools, and academic integrity. For this course, AI tools may be used in accordance with U o f G's academic integrity policies. Misuse of AI, including using it to generate entire assignments or misrepresenting its contributions as your own, will be considered a violation of academic integrity policies. AI tools may be used in this course to assist with generating ideas, creating draft outlines, and improving the clarity of your writing, provided that his use adheres to academic integrity standards. For a full list of acceptable AI use for this course, refer to the document "AI Acceptable Use & Requirements" posted under the Assessment section on our D2L course site.

You must include a declaration about the use of AI for all assignments, whether you used generative AI or not. Details about the declaration can be found in the document "AI Acceptable Use & Requirements" posted under the Assessment section on our D2L course site. Additionally, if you used scientific articles for the preparation of any of your assignments, submit the pdf of each article with your assignments.

A word of caution: You are responsible for verifying the accuracy of any content generated by AI tools. These tools can produce inaccurate, false, misleading, or biased information. It is your responsibility to critically evaluate any generated content. Additionally, be cautious when providing personal or sensitive data to any AI tool.

Standard Statements for Undergraduate Courses

Academic Integrity

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/undergraduate-calendar/undergraduate-degree-regulations-procedures/academic-misconduct/>) is outlined in the Undergraduate Calendar.



Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability. Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to make a booking at least 10 business days in advance, and no later than November 1 (fall), March 1 (winter) or July 1 (summer). For students at the Guelph campus, information can be found on the SAS website. (<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>)

Accommodation of Religious Obligations

If you are unable to meet an in-course requirement due to religious obligations, please email the course instructor within two weeks of the start of the semester to make alternate arrangements.

See the Academic calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Accommodations of Religious Obligations (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/undergraduate-calendar/undergraduate-degree-regulations-procedures/academic-accommodation-religious-obligations/>).

Copies of Out-of-class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Drop Date

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all undergraduate students except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in the Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/undergraduate-calendar/undergraduate-degree-regulations-procedures/dropping-courses/>).

Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

Health and Wellbeing

The University of Guelph provides a wide range of health and wellbeing services at the Vaccarino Centre for Student Wellness (<https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/>). If you are concerned about your mental health and not sure where to start, connect with a Student Wellness Navigator (<https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/navigators>) who can help develop a plan to manage and support your mental health or check out our mental wellbeing resources (<https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/shine-this-year>). The Student Wellness team are here to help and welcome the opportunity to connect with you.

Illness

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g., final exam or major assignment).

Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Resources

The Academic Calendars (<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/?index>) are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the Undergraduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration. (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/undergraduate-calendar/undergraduate-degree-regulations-procedures/academic-consideration-appeals-petitions/>)