Winter 2019
ENVIRON 150
Environmental Journalism, Science Communications, and New Media
Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30-10:45am, Rolfe 2118

Instructor: Jon Christensen, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Institute of the Environment and Sustainability, Department of History, Center for Digital Humanities, Laboratory for Environmental Narrative Strategies, jonchristensen@ioes.ucla.edu

Teaching assistant: Emma Barnosky, Ph.D. student in Environment and Sustainability, Institute of the Environment and Sustainability, barnosky@g.ucla.edu

Instructor’s office location and hours: Humanities 172; book an appointment during office hours Mondays and Wednesdays, 11am to 1pm, at jonchristensen.youcanbook.me; or email the instructor for an appointment at other times.

Course description:
Introduction to environmental journalism, science communications, and new media, including guest appearances by successful practitioners in a 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.

Required books:
Houston, We Have a Narrative: Why Science Needs Story, Randy Olson, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015.


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:

Individual assignments: 40 percent of your grade based on individual assignments.

Pop quizzes based on readings: 30 percent of your grade. Quizzes cannot be made up except in cases of excused absences on the day of the quiz.

Group assignments: 20 percent of your grade based on group assignments building toward a final project. For the final group project, you will work with other students on a team to create a strategic communications campaign and content to engage students in the UC Carbon Neutrality Initiative or another sustainability or environmental campaign approved by the instructor. Your team will be required to create a strategic communications plan, a press release, fact sheet, and web pages, as well as other content appropriate for your strategy, such as videos, a social media campaign, and other communications tactics, such as leaflets, posters, mailers, and events.

Participation: 10 percent of your grade based on participation in class and in your group project.

Assignments are due on the date listed. Late submissions will be penalized 10 percent for each day late.
**Week 1: Introduction to Strategic Environmental Communications.**

**January 7:** Introduction to class.

**January 9:** Introduction to challenge of carbon neutrality.

**Reading done:** “Bending the Curve: 10 Scalable Solutions for Carbon Neutrality and Climate Stability” and associated articles available on the course website.

**Individual assignment #1:** Individual bio, personality test, and skill sets due before midnight on January 9.

**Week 2: The Strategy in Strategic Communications**

**January 14:** The strategy in strategic communications and mapping the landscape.

**Reading and viewing done:** Online lecture by instructor, ‘Climate Lab’ videos, and associated articles available on the course website.

**January 16:** Guest: Nurit Katz, Chief Sustainability Officer, UCLA.


**Individual assignment #2:** Map of student landscape for shaping carbon neutrality, due in class on January 16.

**Week 3: Relating and communicating**

**January 23:** Relating and communicating.

**Reading done:** *If I Understood You, Would I Have This Look on My Face? My Adventures in the Art and Science of Relating and Communicating*, Alan Alda.

**Individual assignment #3:** Reading and naming emotions, due before class on January 23.
**Week 4: Just Enough Research and Storytelling**

**January 28:** Research and interview methods, and the elements of a campaign.

**Reading done:** *Just Enough Research*, Erika Hall, pages 1-75; *Tools for Grassroots Activists*, pages 37-44.

**January 30:** Narrative forms.

**Reading done:** *Houston, We Have a Narrative: Why Science Needs Story*, Randy Olson, pages vii-21 and 67-174; *Re:Imagining Change*, pages 22-51.

**Group assignment #1:** Group photo due before class on January 30.

**Group assignment #2:** Identify client and challenge before class on January 30.

**Week 5: Planning and Executing a Multimedia Campaign**

**February 4:** Messaging and pitching.


**Individual assignment #3:** Briefing on client and challenge due before class on February 4.

**February 6:** Guest: Daniel Melling, Communications and Events Manager, Emmett Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, UCLA School of Law.

**Reading done:** *Re:Imagining Change*, pages 52-89.

**Individual assignment #4:** Message box, ABT, and narrative outline due before class on February 6.
**Week 6: Workshopping and Pitching a Campaign**

**February 11:** Workshop your campaign in class.


**February 13:** Practice project pitches and get feedback in class. Guest: Julie Du Brow, dubroWORKS PR / Marketing.

**Reading done:** *Re:Imagining Change*, pages 90-147.

**Group assignment #3:** Scope of work, logic model/theory of change, and project pitch due in class on February 15.

**Week 7: The Story**

**February 20:** The press release, blog post, story, story pitch, and op-ed.

**Week 8: Social media and the web**

**February 25:** Social media.

**Reading done:** *Tools for Grassroot Activists*, pages 123-130.

**Individual assignment #6 due:** Press release or op-ed due before class on February 25.

**February 27:** Design, UX, UI, personas, SEO, keywords, 10X content, licenses and copyright.

**Reading done:** *Just Enough Research*, Erika Hall, pages 76-152; *Tools for Grassroot Activists*, pages 111-112.
Week 9: Ethics in Storytelling, Strategy and Outcomes

March 4: Speaking truth to power.

Reading done: Houston, We Have a Narrative: Why Science Needs Story, Randy Olson, pages 22-65 and 175-239; Re:Imagining Change, pages 148-161.

Group assignment #4: Wireframes due before class on March 4.

March 6: Truth in storytelling.

Week 10: Final Group Presentations

March 11: Final group presentations.

Group assignment #5: Final group presentations in class this week.

March 13: Final group presentations.

Finals Week: Final Group Project Due

March 20: Final project due.

Group assignment #6: Final project files due before midnight on March 20.

Individual assignment #7: Self and group assessment due before midnight on March 20.