

INQ 300, Fall 2020: Science Reporting: Getting the Whole Story

Instructor	Dr. Karin Saoub Trexler Hall 270F	Phone: (540) 375-2348 Email: saoub@roanoke.edu
Class Meetings	Tuesdays, Thursdays: 8:30 – 10:00 AM in Lucas 010	
Office Hours	All office hours will be conducted via Zoom unless previously arranged. Drop-in hours will be as listed below, though other times will be available - just email me!	
	Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays	12:00 – 12:45 PM
	Tuesdays, Thursdays	11:30 – 12:30 PM
Course Objectives	<p>From the announcement of a new cancer drug to arguments for and against genetically modified foods, the news is full of stories about science. How can the science in these news stories be protected from cultural, political and financial pressures? How can reporters compensate for readers' lack of interest or scientific background without sensationalizing their stories? As science plays an increasingly large role in our modern lives, we need to develop ways for scientific information to be conveyed accurately to the public by the media.</p> <p>In this course we will examine the problems with how science is presented in the news, and work toward a solution to a specific aspect of these problems within the context of a related news story.</p>	
Intended Learning Outcomes	<p>By the end of this course, successful students will be able to:</p> <p>Apply their research findings to a formal project addressing the course topic question and successfully present this proposal in an oral defense.</p> <p>Write well-organized and clearly reasoned papers both individually and with a group. Papers will have clear theses, effective organization, and a minimum of sentence-level errors.</p> <p>Contribute to meaningful, effective discussion and collaborative work that includes expressing, listening to, and debating ideas.</p> <p>Be able to apply critical thinking and quantitative reasoning skills in a meaningful way.</p> <p>Make explicit, meaningful connections between past course work (both in the core curriculum and in their majors) and contemporary issues.</p> <p>Demonstrate understanding of a contemporary issue or problem, an awareness of the types of inquiry needed to understand it, and the resources required for addressing it.</p> <p>Read a news article about a scientific topic and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Evaluate the scientific and reporting methods used- Identify and supply any missing information- Recognize and correct any misleading presentation of the information- Assess the validity of the article's conclusion	
Required Materials	<p><i>Lies, Damned Lies, and Science</i> Seethaler <i>A Writer's Reference</i> Hacker, RC custom edition</p>	

Important Dates We will have four presentations whose dates are listed below. *If you have a conflict with one of these dates please email me ASAP.*

Group article presentations	Tue 9/1
Group solution assessment presentations	Thu 9/24
Practice Final Presentations	Thu 11/5 & Tue 11/10
Final Presentations	Tue 11/24, 1 – 5pm

Course Grades The following table lists the weights for the various forms of assessment for this class.

Class participation	10%
Group article presentations	5%
Individual paper	10%
Group solution assessment	15%
Self – reflection paper	5%
Self – evaluation log	10%
Final Paper	25%
Final Presentation	20%

A grade scale will be determined after final grades are computed, but will be no worse than the scale given below.

	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69		
A	94-100	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66	F 0-59
A-	90-93	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62	

Expected Work Hours This course expects you to spend at least 12 hours of work each week inside and outside of class.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the Academic Integrity policies of Roanoke College. All graded work should be your own work! If you ever have questions about how these policies apply to our class please contact me. Any violations of these policies will automatically be turned over to the Academic Integrity Council.

Face Mask Policy

Face coverings/masks must be worn over the mouth and nose by all students and instructors in classrooms and hallways of academic buildings. By wearing face coverings, we protect our college community and its most vulnerable members. Students who come to class without a face mask that is being worn properly will be asked to leave and will be readmitted only after they are wearing one.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is expected; however, you should not attend class if you are ill.

If you have a temperature of 100.4 or higher or other coronavirus symptoms, don't come to class. Call Health Services IMMEDIATELY. Do not come to class or go to any public area on campus. Do keep up with all readings, assignments, and deadlines. In order for your absence to be excused, you must give Health Services permission to notify me that you have consulted them about coronavirus symptoms. If Health Services informs you that you should isolate and not attend class for multiple days or weeks, inform me so that we can make a plan to keep you current in the course. All absences caused by consultation with

Health Services about coronavirus symptoms or isolation ordered by Health Services will be excused.

This course's policy for all other absences is that if you do have to miss class, you are responsible for learning all material covered that day and making arrangements in advance with your group to compensate for your absence. If you have not discussed your absence with me beforehand, you will be unable to make up any work missed and it will adversely affect your class participation grade.

Course
Structure

During the first part of the semester, we will meet as a class to work through the stages of an example project. At the end of this section the class will be split into groups for the final project and presentation.

During the second part of the semester, starting October 1, the groups will have individual meetings with me to discuss their group's project. (We may have a few meetings with multiple groups or with the whole class if needed.)

Class
Participation

During the first part of the course while we work on our sample project you will need to come to class prepared and willing to contribute to the class' discussion and progress. There will be many ways to do this, including: working in small groups during class time, presenting your group's ideas to the class, joining class discussions, and locating relevant sources and information for our project. You need not do all of these things, but you need to do some of them.

Group article
presentations

After we have selected articles relating to our sample project, you will be assigned an article or articles to read. While reading, you also identify any questions or areas of scientific background you feel need to be further researched. Your group will present this information to the class.

Individual paper

You will learn about some of the scientific background needed to understand our sample project and its news story, and write up your results in a paper. (Remember that our goal is to reach a "National Geographic" level of scientific understanding.)

Group solution
assessment

In small groups, you will assess one of the solutions to our example problem brainstormed by the class. Your group will decide whether or not to support that solution and will write a paper supporting your conclusion. Your group will present your assessment to the class.

Self-reflection paper

This is a short paper where you will reflect on the roles you played during the two group assignments and in-class groups. You will describe what your strengths and challenges as a group member are. We will share these self-reflections to help us choose our groups for the final project.

Self-evaluation log

During the second part of the course you will write periodic self-evaluations of yourself and your group. These will help us work through any problems that may arise.

Final paper

In groups, you will identify a problem with the way scientific content is presented in popular news media, propose a solution to that problem, and support your proposal. This paper will put together all the stages covered in our sample project during the first part of the class and showcase your ability to pull together all your research and writing skills learned in the rest of the INQ curriculum. (These papers will be archived by the General Education Office.)

Final presentation As a group, you will present your problem and proposed solution in an oral defense. Each group will give a practice defense in front of another group, and will also be responsible for giving feedback to the group whose practice defense they attend.

Extra Resources The Writing Center @ Roanoke College, located on the Lower Level of Fintel Library, offers tutorials focused on writing projects and oral presentations for students working in any field. Writers and presenters at all levels of competence may consult the Writing Center at any point in their process—including brainstorming, drafting, organizing, editing, or polishing presentation skills—to talk with trained peer tutors in informal, one-on-one sessions. Schedule a virtual or in-person appointment by going to www.roanoke.edu/writingcenter, where our staff members and workshops are also posted. If it becomes necessary to temporarily discontinue face-to-face services at any time, online tutorials will still be available. Questions? Email writingcenter@roanoke.edu or call 375-4949.

Accessible Education Services AES is located in the Goode-Pasfield Center for Learning and Teaching in Fintel Library. AES provides reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. To register for services, students must self-identify to AES, complete the registration process, and provide current documentation of a disability along with recommendations from the qualified specialist. Please contact Laura Leonard, Assistant Director of Academic Services for Accessible Education, at 540-375-2247 or by e-mail at aes@roanoke.edu to schedule an appointment. If you have registered with AES in the past and would like to receive academic accommodations for this semester, please contact Laura Leonard at your earliest convenience to schedule an appointment. *Please provide me with your documentation within the first 2 weeks of the semester. I must have your documentation at least 48 hours prior to any accommodation made.*

Remote Learning Pivot If the college is forced to suspend in-person attendance as was done during Spring Semester 2020, this class will continue to meet via Zoom at our regular time. I will distribute an amended syllabus. I will email the class that plan. You will need internet connectivity. If you have technology challenges, I need you to email me as soon as the decision is made to go remote so that we can discuss how you can keep up. I will continue to have office hours at my regular times via Zoom.

Tentative Course Schedule

The following schedule is approximate and subject to change. It should give you an idea of the timing of the topics covered and assignments. Due dates are shown in bold. Assignments marked “I” are individual, those marked “G” will be done in groups.

Date	Topic	Assignments
Th A 20	Intro to course, sample problems Choose news story	I: Find articles, Read Ch. 1
M A 24		I: Articles due by 2pm
T A 25	Talk about assessing articles/group work Form 1st groups	G: Article presentations/science Q's assigned
Th A 27	NO CLASS - Work on presentation	
T S 1	Group article presentations	G: Science Q's due
Th S 3	Talk about presentations/groups Choose science Q's to answer	I: Science paper assigned

T	S 8	NO CLASS - Work on papers	
Th	S 10	Share science info, brainstorm solutions Presentation rubric Form 2nd groups	I: Science paper due I: Self-reflection paper assigned G: Solution assessment assigned
T	S 15	NO CLASS - Work on solution assessments	
Th	S 17	<i>Group/prof meeting: discuss progress</i>	
T	S 22	NO CLASS - Work on solution assessments	
Th	S 24	Group Solution assessment presentations	G: Solution assessment paper due
T	S 29	Share self-reflections. Form final project groups	I: Self-reflection paper due G: Final Project topic/news story assigned
W	S 30		G: Final project topic/news story due by 2pm I: Evaluation form due by 2pm
Th	O 1	<i>Group/prof meeting: topics/news stories</i>	
M	O 5		G: Bibliography due by 2pm
T	O 6	<i>Group/prof meeting: assess sources</i>	
W	O 7		I: Evaluation form due by 2pm
Th	O 8	<i>Group/prof meeting: solution proposal</i>	
T	O 13	NO CLASS - work day	
Th	O 15	NO CLASS - work day	
T	O 20	NO CLASS - work day	G: 1st paper draft due by noon
W	O 21		I: Evaluation form due by 2pm
Th	O 22	<i>Group/prof meeting: paper drafts</i>	
T	O 27	NO CLASS - work day	
Th	O 29	NO CLASS - work day	G: 2nd paper draft due by 5pm
M	N 2		I: Evaluation form due by 2pm
T	N 3	<i>Group/prof meeting: paper drafts</i>	
Th	N 5	Practice presentations	
T	N 10	Practice presentations	
W	N 11		I: Evaluation form due by 2pm
Th	N 12	<i>Group/prof meeting: presentations</i>	
T	N 17	NO CLASS - work day	

T	N 24	Oral Defenses 1-5 PM I: Summary Evaluation form due G: Final Project due
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