

Communicating Scientific Knowledge (K001122)

Course size (nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)

Credits 6.0 Study time 180 h Contact hrs 45.0 h

Course offerings in academic year 2018-2019

A (semester 2) English

Lecturers in academic year 2018-2019

Parker, Christopher PS05 lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2018-2019

	crdts	offering
Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences (main subject Communication Studies)	6	A
Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences (main subject Political Sciences)	6	A
Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences (main subject Sociology)	6	A
Joint Section Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences	6	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

Position of the course

Contents

Writing is not simply a matter of transferring thoughts to page; it is constitutive of thought. It is in the process of writing—whether taking notes or putting the final touches on a book monograph—that we articulate our thoughts and truly see them for what they are worth. More generally, there is also a strong link between the conventions for communicating scientific knowledge and the conventions that underpin its production. Attention to the craft of writing, and to the practices that underpin effective scientific communication more generally, is thus every bit as crucial to knowledge production as method and theory. Yet rarely is a conscious reflection on academic writing and scientific communication incorporated into the social science curriculum.

In this course, students will be introduced to the basic conventions and norms of academic writing and scientific communication. Attention will be given to a variety of practical writing tasks, including note taking, synopsis, presentation texts, research proposals and term papers. Students will also be expected to engage in discussion, and to present oral summaries of assigned articles. There will be an emphasis on group exercises both in and outside of class.

In order to write effectively, one must first read effectively. Accordingly, a good bit of time will be spent reading, analyzing and learning how to engage with various genres of academic writing and communication. In the process, students will be exposed to various strategies for communicating scientific knowledge, and encouraged to apply those lessons through practical assignments.

The transfer of basic skills and conventions will be an important part of the course. Ultimately, though, the aim is also to prepare students for the more advanced academic reading and writing assignments they will encounter in subsequent years. In particular, the course is conceived as a “bridge” between the introductory courses taught in the first semester of year one, and the Critical Thinking modules taught in the first semester of year two. There will also be a degree of coordination between this course and the

seminar "Current Issues 1" (certain assignments might be given in function of "Current Issues 1," and vice-versa).

Initial competences

Final competences

This course contributes to the following learning outcomes of the Bachelor of Sciences in Social Sciences.

The student:

has an active knowledge of the most important theories, currents and concepts prevailing in the domain of the social sciences (LO1);
recognises the cross-sections, the intersections and the cross-fertilisations that are noticeable amongst the different social sciences (LO3);
is able to apply social theories and concepts on a well-delineated, socially and scientifically relevant research topic that relates to the European Union or other (international) institutions (LO4);
can formulate a valid scientific research question on a topic that relates to the social sciences (LO6);
can identify, gather and critically process the relevant sources and literature on a specific social sciences research topic (LO7);
knows how to set up a scientific and methodologically correct research design (LO8);
masters the techniques of good and accurate research reporting in oral and written form (LO10);
has an investigative, problem-oriented and critical attitude towards social, political and media-related phenomena and scientific research results with regard thereof (LO11);
recognises the multilayered and complex character of social, political and media-related facts and phenomena (LO12);
prioritises scientific integrity and honesty in his or her scientific research activities (LO16);
approaches dominant tendencies within the social and the policy domain in a critical manner (LO17);
has awareness of the social role and function of social scientists (LO18).
At the end of this course, students should have a firm command of the basic conventions and formalities of scientific communication and academic writing, including:

how to take notes effectively;
how to structure a scientific report/paper;
the importance of proper and complete citation, and the use and reporting of sources more generally;
how to identify a "problematique," articulate research questions, and develop a thesis statement;
how to write a review essay;
how to write a (basic) research proposal;
how to write a term paper;
how to orally present the findings of research.
At the end of this course, students should have a basic understanding of how to:

read an academic text, identifying the problem statement, research questions, thesis statement, and methodology;
identify and effectively summarize the main point(s) of an academic article;
critically analyze and understand how empirical data are organized and presented in function of an article's main point(s);
situate the main argument of a text in relation to academic disciplines, discussions and debates;
write an effective summary of an academic article in function of one's own research objectives.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Lecture

Extra information on the teaching methods

The course consists of interactive lectures with classroom discussions and direct

questions to students. In-class group activities (micro teaching, group exercises) will also be organized. Students are expected to prepare for class (i.e. read the assigned texts and submit assigned exercises on-time), to participate actively in classroom discussions, and to make an active contribution to group exercises assigned both in and outside the classroom.

All required reading materials will be made available via the on-line learning platform "PointCarré." Students are encouraged to purchase the latest edition of The Little Brown Handbook, as it will almost certainly prove handy throughout the course of their studies (and later in professional life as well). But the particular chapters relevant to our course will be available via PointCarré.

Learning materials and price

Handbook (Required) : The Little Brouwn Handbook, Latest edition, New York: Pearson Educational

Course text (Required) : Communicating Scientific Knowledge, Various book chapters and journal articles to be provided via PointCarré

References

Course content-related study coaching

Evaluation methods

end-of-term evaluation and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the first examination period

Written examination

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the second examination period

Written examination

Examination methods in case of permanent evaluation

Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent evaluation

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

Students will be responsible for the submission of 4 group assignments, and 2 individual assignments, during the course of the semester. The final exam will consist of a series of questions designed to test practical knowledge, plus one essay question in which students will be required to write a structured response to an academic text.

Calculation of the examination mark

Continuous assessment (permanent evaluatie)

**70% of the total score, distributed as follows:*

- Essay 1: 10%
- Essay 2: 20%
- Essay 3: 15%
- Essay 4: 25%

End of term assessment (periodegebonden evaluatie)

** 30% (Final Exam)*